

# SPORT AND ITS PLEASURES,

PHYSICAL AND GASTRONOMICAL.



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L'EMBARRAS DES RICHESSES.

*Front.*

SPORT  
AND ITS PLEASURES.  
Physical & Gastronomical.

BY THE AUTHOR OF HIGHLAND SPORTS,  
SAYAH & Co & Co



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# S P O R T

AND

## I T S P L E A S U R E S ,

PHYSICAL AND GASTRONOMICAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“HIGHLAND SPORTS,” “SAYAH,” ETC., ETC.

\* \* \* \* “O, let the morn,  
Ye sportsmen—let the fresh and wholesome morn,  
Whether in summer’s frolic robe array’d,  
Or winter’s soberer garb, still call you forth!  
And if the fore-spent night have witness’d nought  
But healthful fare and modest temperate cups—  
Lib’ral, yet chastened, full without excess—  
No bell nor loud alarum shall you need  
To rouse you from your sleep, refresh’d and clear,  
And ready for the field.”

L O N D O N :

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LONDON :

PRINTED BY ROGERSON AND TUXFORD,

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## INTRODUCTION.

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SPORT is a word only thoroughly understood and fully appreciated in reference to the varied pleasures it affords to those of the land we live in; though, in another sense, it is followed and en-

joyed by the dwellers in every nation of the world.

Wherever the foot of man has left its print, an Englishman has ever proved himself a master of the art. In recent years, however, justice compels me to admit, our Gallic neighbours and allies have made some successful advances as sportsmen ; though they have still much to learn as far as the question physically and prac-

tically is concerned. But gastronomically they are no bad judges of what should be—that is, in vulgar parlance, “they are up to snuff.” What being up to snuff means, I leave to the discrimination of my readers. I imagine it is taking things at a pinch; and I admit they are fully equal to the concoction of a ragout, the larding of a fillet, or serving a *salmi*, at a moment’s notice.

Be it as it may, very many years since I chanced to meet with a quaint and highly interesting sporting work from the very clever pen of Mons. E. Blazé, which greatly amused me. And now, after the lapse of long years, on referring to it again, I have been induced to cull therefrom a few tit bits, for which, if he be living, I sincerely thank him.

The French author thus announces his

work, which refers principally to shooting :

“ Ce n’est point un livre ordinaire ; il vous enseigne l’art de vous amuser, et par dessus l’art de vous assurer une bonne digestion.”

As regards my own work, which treats of sporting physically and gastronomically, I confess to none of my friend’s assurance. I only beg that every sportsman who fires a shot during the season, kill or no kill,

will buy it; and beg all his unsporting friends to do so likewise. In the meantime,

“ L’esperance me console.”

But “hope deferred maketh the heart sick;” so please to attend to my wishes at once, and order the second edition, with additional receipts and improvements. It would be desirable that every one who has taken out a game certificate do so likewise.

I feel it right to add, that some portion of the work has already appeared in that widely-circulated sporting paper which all Europe knows and values — “Bell’s Life.”



# SPORT AND ITS PLEASURES,

## PHYSICAL AND GASTRONOMICAL.

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### CHAPTER I.

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“He lives long, that lives well.”

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TAKE this assertion in what sense you may, gastronomically or morally, I hold fast to the opinion that, while all sorts of discussions have been going on in Parliament and out of Parliament about civil-service examinations, and diplomatic examinations, and military examinations, and so forth, in which a vast number of blockheads have somehow or another been successful, and a vast number of very clever fellows unsuccessful, while some have had clerkships and commissions bestowed on them, doubtless

on very just grounds, without any examination at all, a grand point has been lost sight of, most beneficial to the nation at large and her Majesty's sporting subjects in particular—viz., an examination for good cooks. Laugh who will, I declare—and would support my belief by betting six ponies to one on the event, could it be verified—that far more people are annually killed by bad cooks and bad cooking, than by inexperienced medical men, or from any other cause. Who has not been miserably taken in, disgusted, and defrauded by a jolly, fat-faced female, or a sanctimonious thin one, who advertised herself as a professed cook, having previously lived with Mr. This and My Lord That—whose amiability has induced them, however unjustifiably, to give her a professional character—who nevertheless, in a week, poisons you and your family with the grease that ought to have been skimmed from the stock-pot, boils your mutton to rags, roasts your beef to a

cinder, sends your partridges up with the entrails in, your woodcocks with the trail out, and so on *ad infinitum*?

Now, I repeat my opinion; and were I an M.P., instead of bothering myself about Cherbourg or the estimates, or aught else, I would bring in a bill to found a college for cooks, make them pass a practical examination in the art of gastronomy, and hang two-thirds of the present individuals, for swindling the public by the appropriation of a name to which they are in no manner entitled.

Understand me—I affirm that gastronomy, taking it in the true acceptation of the term, is an art, if practised with ability, which ennobles a man or woman, as does that of painting or sculpture, or aught else—an art, in fact, that refines the mind and taste of man, improves his digestion, and consequently his temper, his happiness, the comfort of his home and all around him, and adds years to

his life. By "gastronomy" I do not mean gluttony : I mean quality, not quantity—refined eating, not coarse feeding. *De gustibus non est disputandum* ; which, being translated, means—Some like apples ; others onions. A young onion is no bad thing, with a morsel of bread and cheese : a Portugal onion, even with such accompaniments, would be strong and offensive.

We have all heard of the man who could rough it on a beefsteak and a bottle of port. No doubt of it. What would our poor lads in the Crimea have given for such a repast, during the winter of 1855 and 1856 ? What, however, if the beefsteak were as tough as the hide of the ox from which it was cut, instead of being nice, tender, well-cooked London rumpsteak ? and the wine sloe-juice, instead of good wholesome old port ? Why, the roughing it would be *de facto*, instead of a mere stretch of ima-

gination, intending to imply a very simple means of existence.

Again, many people constantly assert that two or three good mutton-chops, a mealy potato, and a pint of bitter ale is a dinner for a prince. I believe you, "my pippins"—even for the Prince of Wales, son though he be of our beloved Sovereign, and heir to the crown of England, long life to him!—always provided, however, the chops be first-rate; the potatoes, as all potato-merchants declare do theirs, boil like a ball of flour; and the ale bitter, from excellent hops, not quassia, and as clear as crystal. Change the scene. Let the chops be tough, and served up floating in grease, as your professed advertising cooks not seldom do serve them up; your potatoes soddened; your bitter beer muddy, and sour withal: and I question whether the simple-living gentleman, without he be blessed with an inward man like iron, will not cry "Hold, enough!"

Add to the greasy chops and soddened potatoes, a dirty table-cloth and salt the colour of sand; and what living digestion could face such a repast with gusto?

Let me add, previous to getting deeper into my subject, that it is not only the eatables with which you are served, but the mode and manner of serving them, which satisfy a delicate gastronomical taste. Would you like to drink sherry from a tea-cup, or beer from a tin pot? Would you dine well, however hungry, on hot mutton, placed on a cold and ill-washed plate? No, my good friends—believe me, no. The most simple repast becomes food for a gastronome only if well cooked, and served with refinement. Moreover, it costs not a penny extra: on the contrary, it is an economy.

Now this is what I term simplicity (pardon the apparent rudeness of decision): I ask a friend to dine with me. He is perfectly well aware what I

can afford to offer him : he does not desire, nor would he thank me for, more, if he be my friend ; and a friend only should be asked to dinner—the presence of any other person is injurious to digestion. Dinner is announced. We sit down to a table neither too small nor too large, covered with a table-cloth of simple pattern, as white as snow, and napkins to match. The latter are an indispensable means of comfort and cleanliness, in these days of moustaches. My delf or china is simple, and in accordance with my means ; and, the season fitting, a nice bouquet of flowers serves as a centre-piece. This, in the most humble of homes, may be afforded. The covers are removed. He finds a nice, small, well-boiled leg of Dartmoor mutton—not the Dartmoor mutton that is generally sold as such, but real Dartmoor or Exmoor mutton, from “Two Bridges” or “Porlock”—good potatoes, and good French beans ; this followed by a roast partridge and its requirements. Do not

say to him, "You see your dinner, Charlie;" but leave Charlie to eat it in peace: the more he eats, the better proof of the mutton. Of course, an establishment of thousands can do that which one of hundreds is denied. But the same man who in early youth has lived in the former, being a younger son, in later life finds his home in the latter. His tastes and feelings are, nevertheless, the same, and, in due proportion, equally enjoyed. In the richest establishments, that taste and that refinement are often absent, which reign in the simple cottage, if the knowledge of perfect gastronomical art and high breeding are wanting.

However, having opened the subject, my object is to give a little pleasant gastronomical advice to the sporting public in general, and sporting friends in particular, who, having had the great enjoyment of a good day's sport physically and mentally, desire to finish it up corporeally, with due regard to palate

and gastronomic indulgence (I speak only in reference to game), in the full meaning of the word.

The shooting season is now fairly commenced. The hare, quiet on her form, which for some months past has imagined itself in peace with mankind, finds that peace was only a truce, which truce, till March next, is ended. Even on this splendid day of autumn-time, while my pen traces these lines, how many a hare, partridge, and rabbit will quit the delightful freshness of the clover or turnip-field for the heated air of the kitchen! How many quails, already on the wing for Africa and Asia, will find their hasty journey stopped by a small shot! Alas! having fattened themselves, the better to withstand the chances of the voyage, their plump and yellow breasts remain to satisfy the tastes of gourmands. They were, doubtless, created to be eaten at the second course; and they calmly and wisely submit to a destiny they cannot avert. But, in my humble

opinion, they eat well at all times, though some declare it is a grave error.

It is now late in the autumn. I have not handled a gun; and yet I hear from all sides that never was there such a season for partridges; and the number that my good friends have permitted me to hang up in my larder, thence allowing me, through the hands of my cook, various gastronomic indulgences, proves what I hear is fact. In the meantime, I am reminded that an amiable philosopher, M. Anthony Deschamps, once put to me the following question:

“Do you believe that man is permitted to kill a partridge?”

“Unquestionably,” said I — “in the shooting season, having a licence, and on ground where none can dispute his right.”

“You do not understand me: I ask if you believe, notwithstanding the three conditions you have named, that man is justified in de-

stroying a partridge — an animal which God has created?"

"Most undoubtedly; but on condition that he eats it also."

"You believe, then, one may fearlessly eat a partridge?"

"Certainly, when 'cooked to perfection.'"

Pythagore, Bishop of St. Peter's, affirmed otherwise. I am aware of it. So much the worse for the partridges. They ought to be pitied. Listen to me. I admit the dilemma. Either we ought to eat partridges, or they should eat us. That is the question from which you cannot escape. As each year they have fifteen or twenty young, remain ten years without destroying them, and their numbers will equal the wasps or mushrooms. Then adieu to your corn and oats, your barley and your grain. Therefore partridges must be eaten, or horses shot. Eat partridges

those who love claret. If only for the simple reason that we cannot live without bread, they must be eaten. This right of eating partridges comes from a higher power. God said to Noah—"You shall be master of all the animals." *Manui vestræ traditi sunt*, which means that the animals are given to your hands necessarily that your hands should put them into your mouth; therefore eat all you like. Man was not made to feed on grass; his canine teeth sufficiently prove it.

The Bishop of St. Peter's was a first-rate fellow, but he had little taste in culinary matters. Let the world talk, but eat on; added to which, one thing is positive, that if all were listened to, none would be eaten. In this the first chapter of "Sport Gastronomical," I would beg you to recollect the pleasure you have enjoyed—first, in finding your game; secondly, when it is found; thirdly, when the point of your dog has caused your heart to beat, and given you those de-

lightful emotions which a sportsman alone can appreciate ; fourthly, when you have fired and brought down your bird ; fifthly, when your well-trained dog lays it at your feet ; sixthly, when your he-cook—for, alas ! I have only the “ half ” of a she-cook—admiring the hares, partridges, quails, and rabbits, meditates a sauce, or prophesies a salmis. The experienced eye of a first-rate cook never deceives him. The quails are for Tuesday, the partridges will succeed them ; then come the hares and rabbits. A rabbit—mark ye, readers—is an invaluable aid to the stock-pot. Ask any cook in England, worthy the name, and he will tell you that a rabbit, barring the colour, can be converted into a rump-steak ; and as for sauces I question whether it could not be stewed into tomata sauce without tomatas. But more hereafter touching my young friend the rabbit, for old ones have less value ; and as for the pheasants, you must wait awhile. This

is a subject which requires much study and gastronomic meditation. It is necessary to consult the atmosphere—if it is hot or cold ; if the wind blows from the north or south. These observations, made with care and thought, determine the day when the pheasant will embalm your dining-room with its delicious odour. Recollect that a pheasant killed the day previous is not worth a barn-door fowl. Savarin decides this ; and who has ever discussed the question with more grace, science, and amiability ? All these culinary hints will add greatly to your enjoyment. Some sportsmen think little of them ; I by no means agree with them. As regards myself, I can appreciate all things, and take advantage of the few joys allotted to man as I find them. This system generally answers, and I am tolerably well ; imitate me ; and when I have the pleasure of meeting you, we will compare notes. In the meantime, adieu ! In my next chapter I shall com-

mence with the gastronomic advantages and virtues of the hare, and then run through the list of all animals coming under the denomination of game.

## CHAPTER II.

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“Leggi e credi.”

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### THE HARE.

IN my last chapter I spoke generally of the gastronomical pleasures afforded the world at large, and sportsmen in particular, as regards game. Permit me now to sketch them in detail. I will commence with the hare—the timid, nervous hare. This amiable animal is thus spoken of, in a quaint little volume of other days, from the pen of a very energetic sportsman named Arthur Stringer, and printed at Belfast by James Blow, in the year of our Lord 1714: “Her flesh

is venison, but of very little value; for being naturally so fearful, she is never fat." Stringer was apparently wide awake in all matters appertaining to the chase; moreover, a keen and practical sportsman, and Blow did his work *con amore*. Yet I by no means agree with Stringer. If her flesh is venison, this fact alone would constitute the great value of the animal, gastronomically speaking; and as for the fat, connoisseurs deny that a hare should be fat when placed, stuffed, well roasted, and smoking, on the table of a man of taste. But more on this subject anon. In the meantime, permit me to say that all the world—save the small minority who do not understand the joys of sport in the field, and still less the gastronomical joys of game well cooked on the board—owe the deepest debt of gratitude to the little animal in question, which they repay in due accordance with the world's ways, by torturing her to death, hunting her to

death, shooting her to death, snaring her, wounding and destroying her from fear, coursing her, and, lastly, by eating her ; all for their selfish pleasure. But, alas ! who can depict her agony ? How does she return these insults and miseries ? Why, in the kindest possible manner, by affording endless pleasures to man. First, we have the pleasures of hunting her, and there are few more agreeable pastimes to a true sportsman than that of following a well-selected pack of harriers. Secondly, we course her ; what delight—what excitement in a good coursing match ! Ask those who attend the Altcar and Newmarket meetings. Then we shoot her, her father and her grandfather, her sons and her daughters. Let me take breath ere I touch on the gastronomic pleasures she affords to man ; for, I declare, a good hunted hare, cooked two hours after it is killed, is better than all the venison in the world. To prove the fact, few refuse to eat her.

Previous, however, to dwelling more carefully on the gastronomical virtues of the hare, permit me to speak for a moment in the words of my friend Blazé. He remarks as follows, and who dares contradict him? not I, for my sight is bad: "It is easy to discover the sex of a hare on its form; the buck always keeps his ears close to the side of his head; the doe, on the contrary, keeps them open and enlarged on both sides."

"Indivisa jacet medis quando auris in armis,  
Ille tibi mas sit: quando intraque pendet  
Utriusque foemina."

"The Abbé Daries of Carniol, in the Basses Alpes," he adds, "was a great sportsman. One day, at the moment of proceeding to his clerical duties, a peasant came to say that he had marked a hare on her form. The Abbé hastened through the service, and quitting the church, took his gun. Arrived near the hare, he shouted

to his guide, 'Turn her up ; I do not murder my game.' The hare is started ; the Abbé takes aim, but hesitates to fire. The peasant is astonished. 'Fool,' said the sporting dignitary, 'do you not see it is a doe ; and she is heavy ?' I intreat all sportsmen, having the keen sight and discrimination of the worthy Abbé, to act in a similar manner. In such case we should have a far greater supply of an animal which I shall convince you affords us immense physical and gastronomical indulgence. I am not informed as to whether the Abbé was father confessor to the peasant ; if so, the latter must evidently have committed a great fault to disturb his reverence at the moment he was proceeding to divine service ; still more so, that he deranged the worthy Abbé's thoughts, who, instead of thinking of his christian duties, only thought of shooting a hare, in which, after all, he was doubly disappointed. Moreover, he ought to have informed

himself of the lady's state, and not have deprived the Abbé of the pleasure on his table. Query, did he get absolution? I should fear not."

Again he says, "The hare does not see well before her; if she comes towards you, do not move; she will pass between your legs. A hare chased by my dogs, and wishing to escape from a garden, broke her skull against a fence through which she was about to pass." This doubtless was true; and pity 'tis 'tis true, for the brains of the animal must have been lost; and the brains of a hare, fried in batter, are an excellent little delicacy awaiting substantials.

He adds to the above little *historiettes* the following:—"I have often seen, during a campaign, three or four regiments disperse spontaneously, and forming a large circle, surround an unfortunate hare—ten thousand men, many shouting, mixed like a swarm of bees. The hare being secured, each man

returned to his ranks, and nothing more was seen but the poor hare hanging behind a knapsack, awaiting the night's bivouac, when the cook of the company to which the owner belonged concocted it into a savoury stew."

Now, I am well aware that the illustrious Iron Duke kept a pack of hounds in the Peninsula, and doubtless accounted for many a brush and many a scut. But here you observe our gallant allies, God bless them, in the matter of sport, as in all other things, "beat us by chalks" in their own opinion. They convert their military into hounds. Ten thousand men snap up a hare in no time; and five hundred thousand can prop up an empire or anything else. However, it only proves my assertion to be correct—vast are the pleasures, physical and gastronomical, afforded to man by the timid little animal hare.

In days lang syne, the right foot or pad of

a hare was presented to the King of France, on the bended knee. More, it appears to have been a privilege which those possessing it were not eager to cede to others. During a long period in France many were termed "Knights of the Hare," who, not having the real title, were desirous of bearing it.

Let me tell you the origin of this so-called nickname. Philip of Valois and Edward III. of England were about to commence a battle, when a hare, getting up in the centre of the French camp, the soldiers, desirous to catch her, caused a great tumult. Some officers of the rear-guard, fearing the King of France was in danger, rode forward to succour him, and for their prowess demanded knighthood. "I am compelled to refuse you," said the king, "because you would be termed 'Knights of the Hare.'"

But, to return to more important matters: a

hare killed, and emptied when warm, and cooked and eaten without delay, is a gastronomic indulgence difficult to surpass. In shooting quarters I have not seldom dined off a hare which lived an hour previous to being placed on the table; but a hunted hare, brought warm from the hunting-field, and placed at once into the hands of your "*Vatel*," is, *par excellence*, the mode and manner which surpasses all others to secure the pleasures gastronomical which the animal promises in the most refined enjoyment. If you allow her to become cold and stiff, far better send her to a friend some hundred miles distant; the journey will do her good. At all events, hang her up for a week before you deliver her into the experienced hands of your cook.

There are a variety of modes for securing great gastronomical indulgence from the eight or nine pounds of animal flesh called hare. I conclude you to have enjoyed the physical pleasure of kill-

ing her, either with hounds, greyhounds, or gun—in fact, according to the well-known advice of Mrs. Glass, you have caught your hare. Having done so, with due respect to the important question of the proper time, jug it, or hash it, or stew it, or make a pie of it, or fillet it, or roast it, or bone it and stuff it.

Our allies beyond the white cliffs of *perfidie* Albion do at times, doubtless for economy's sake, divide the animal. The fore-quarters, they declare, make an excellent ragout: the hind-quarters go to the spit. But this mode and manner, as I said before, of making two dinners out of one hare, though praiseworthy in its economical acceptation, is sacrilege in its gastronomical one. Moreover, they have a vile habit of larding a hare; this detestable wrong to all culinary art should be avoided. It is like mixing oil with water. Veal and ham; eggs and bacon: even fricandeau may be

larded, never Piggy and Pussy. I say, avoid it; that is, dismiss your cook at once if he presume to commit so fatal an error in his art. Though what is termed jugged hare is by no means to be despised, the more so if a dash of old port or good burgundy find its way into the stew, the perfect manner of eating hare is to roast her entire.

Give three decided orders to your artist, if you are not perfectly satisfied as regards his talents as a “game” cook: First, let the animal be sufficiently done to be tender; secondly, not too much done, or she will be worth nothing; thirdly, done to a turn.

In order to ascertain if the hare be old or young—of course not a very difficult point of decision to a real sportsman, however it may to persons in general, who are not the less fond of eating it—I may hint that the paws of the forelegs should be bent at the knee. If the sepa-

ration of the two bones is perceptible to the touch, she is young. Moreover, a good hare is plump—her back is strong, large, and broad, but she is never fat.

The mountain hare, as far as the pleasures gastronomical are concerned, is far preferable to those killed on the low grounds. She feeds on herbs and wild thyme, and her flesh becomes perfumed with an aroma truly sublime. Generally speaking, I may add, the drier the earth the better the hare.

While on this agreeable subject, I may observe that I could never understand why Moses forbade the Jews, and in like manner Mahomet the Moors, to eat hares. Such, nevertheless, is fact. Pork I can readily understand: in warm climates the flesh of piggy cannot be very wholesome, and all over the world it is indigestible; whereas the hare is always good in due season, with the thermometer at 100. Even in October, spare-ribs and pork chops, black

puddings and chitlings give one a stomatic all-overishness, in fact, a sensation of disgust, engendering greasy ideas. Even pork pie—a rare gastronomic indulgence well seasoned, and eaten in Old England with the thermometer at 45—are unpleasant words to ears polite even in the City of the Sultan, or under the walls of Jerusalem; but hare never—believe me, never.

The Greeks and Romans served a hare on their tables only on great occasions; and they have vaunted the efficacy of the flesh in certain circumstances which good taste does not permit me to enlarge on, but which those who desire may conceive; whereas the flesh was forbidden even by the Druids and Britons, in early ages. Pliny tells us also an old proverb of his time: When you eat hare you are handsome for the seven days following. Martial adds: "*Inter quadrupedes gloria prima lepus.*"

The Romans were persuaded that the flesh of a hare preserved freshness and beauty. Ladies, then, I recommend you, particularly the younger portion, who hope for the joys matrimonial, to enjoy the pleasures gastronomical afforded by the little animal we have named.

The Emperor Alexander ate hare at every meal when the animal was in season. Among the Greeks it was their emblem of peace, and never was emblem better judged. According to their custom of deifying, they placed a hare in the rank of constellations.

In fact, to say one word in apology for the hare, if apology be necessary, I will add that Lucullus did full justice in his expressions of its excellencies. Lucullus! do you, my sporting readers, understand the immense authority of the name in practical gastronomy? Alas! it is to be regretted that history has not preserved for our

benefit the receipt of the sauce served to this gentleman. We have Worcestershire Sauce, and Melton Sauce, and Soyer Sauce, and scores of other sauces, for the most part appetisant, and great additions to the art gastronomic ; and why not Lucullus Sauce ? But the most material points are ever precisely those which historians neglect. Therefore, not having the receipt adopted by Lucullus, permit me to recommend to your notice that which I use myself ; it is very simple, and to be had in most parts of Europe, in China also, as far as I know to the contrary, being simply currant jelly.

I will conclude this chapter by one of my friend Blazé's hare chases, as he terms it—certainly one of the most extraordinary in the memory of man:

“Four hundred thousand men, French and Austrians, composed the field. The meet was at a village called Wagram, a few leagues from Vienna. The plain was alive with hares ; at every ten yards one was on

its legs. Our guns and cannon caused them great alarm, and they naturally fled by scores before us, to save themselves. In their flight, however, they met with two hundred thousand Austrians, who turned them towards the French again, and thus the poor timid creatures were in consternation between the two armies. A charge of cavalry, in no manner made on their account, put them to the rout; they pierced the ranks, passed between our legs, and were killed by dozens, and taken alive. Alas! that day we beheld a butchery of men and hares. Never were so many seen, never were so many killed. That night, after the battle, conquerors and conquered supped together on jugged hare."

My next chapter will make you acquainted with the partridge. Ah! what delight we have in shooting them, and \* \* \* \*! in eating them. I can find no word sufficiently gastronomical in the

English language; and, as I desire this little book should find its way into the cottage of the poor sportsman as well as into the palace of the rich one, I will eschew as far as possible the French tongue, which, however desirable in a gastronomical point of view, is utterly incomprehensible in a sporting one.

In the meantime, previous to the killing and serving up a plump partridge with bread sauce and other little delicacies, I would offer to your notice a few very simple receipts which, after considerable practical experience, I have found as greatly contributing to my gastronomical pleasures, as regards the cooking of the little animal hare introduced to your notice. In saying, however, that they have contributed to *my* pleasures, I by no means presume to imagine that they will meet the precise palate of the fifty thousand sportsmen who will place my book in their libraries, having one in

their pockets, always previously paying for it, inasmuch as I am not a selfish man—no sportsman is: he never, of course, fires at the same bird as yourself, and offers to bet ten to one he killed it, when the bird falls. Moreover, I am perfectly aware that all the he's and she's—I beg their pardon—ladies and gentlemen denominated cooks throughout the length and breadth of glorious England, would feel indignant at the bare idea of their not being perfect adepts at the art of hare cooking, and all the advertising ladies who improperly usurp the name equally so.

Fancy, for instance, a respectable old lady, living in a second floor, Chelsea, S.W., clean, comfortable, and economical, pinching herself in all ways to aid her son Thomas, who is learning practical farming in the Fens of Lincolnshire. The shooting season arrives; Tom is already a first-rate shot, if not quite so expert at handling a plough, or so good

a judge of shorthorns and mangel wurzel as the handling of guns. And, consequently, the dear boy, very properly, sends his mother a hare. The mother is delighted — what mother is not, when her son sends her game? She rings her bell for her landlady, who forthwith obeys the summons.

“Good evening, Mrs. B.”

“Good evening, mum.”

“My dear boy has sent me some game. Of course, you can cook a hare.”

“In course, mum.”

“It is years since I ate one, Mrs. B.,” says the good old woman; “but this is my boy’s hare. How do you cook a hare, Mrs. B.?”

“Why, mum, we skins um, and we stuffs um, and we roasts um, and we serves um, and you jellies um.”

“Very well, Mrs. B.; let me have it for dinner to-morrow.”

I had not the pleasure of dining with the worthy widow ; but if Mrs. B. cooked and roasted the hare which Tom had killed the day before, I am very glad I had not ; and I repeat, the roasting of a hare to perfection is an art that one cook out of twenty rarely attains.

Now there is a very old story which will bear repeating. Whether it occurred as regards an M.D. or an attorney-at-law is of little importance, and I do not recollect. It ran thus : Either the one or the other chanced to dine with a wealthy old gentleman who possessed a cook who thoroughly understood the art gastronomical, and was worthy the name she bore. Suffice, the dinner was excellent, and done ample justice to accordingly. After dinner, when drinking their claret, the old gentleman modestly detailed to an attentive listener some care, either of body or estate, fancying doubtless that his profuse hospitality justified such conduct, with-

out additional fee or reward, ending his appeal by the question : "What would you advise or suggest that I should do, or take, under these circumstances?" The reply was, simply take advice.

In like manner we constantly hear of medical men and others recommending change of air, horse exercise, sea-bathing, port wine, and even Bordeaux to those who, however ailing in body, can scarcely afford to exist upon what they do, or where exist, or obtain small beer. It would therefore be absurd to put the same cookery book into the hands of a housekeeper who can spend four hundred a-year that you would into that of one who can spend four thousand; and yet the same gastronomical pleasures, in due proportion, may be enjoyed by both. As regards the hare, I will only say—it makes excellent soup, thick and clear; and a cook who has not adopted the name under false pretence will be able to convert it into either.

I have already told you when and how a hare should be roasted. If you are rich, baste it with cream; if you are poor, with milk. I am not certain the latter is not preferable. You may also jug it, and hash it, and stew it, and broil it. Under all these circumstances it is excellent, if it pass through the hands of one equal to the gastronomical art required. I give you a few simple receipts: practical proof enables me to assert their value, though one is of the year 1734, and another the year 1844.

“TO STEW A HARE FOR THE RICH, 1734.

“Pull your hare to pieces, and bruise the bones. Put it into a stew-pan with three pints of strong broth. At the same time put in an onion and a faggot of sweet herbs. Let it stew leisurely for four hours; then put in a pint of good claret; let it stew for two or three hours longer; take out what bones you can find with the herbs and onions, if not dissolved; put in an anchovy or two with the claret; shake it up with half a pound of butter, when ready for the table.”

The addition of a woodcock—when at hand—or a small portion of a neck of venison, a worthy Abbot assured me was undeniable.

“TO STEW A HARE FOR THE RICH OR POOR, 1844.

“Cut your hare to pieces, dividing as far as possible the meat from the bones ; put it into a vessel, add three-quarters of a pint of small beer, the same of water, a large onion stuck with cloves, whole pepper, and some salt. Let this stew gently for an hour, closely covered ; then add a quart of good gravy, and stew two hours longer ; add a spoonful of smooth flour and a little cayenne.”

In the one case we have claret, in the other small beer. I like a little good beer, having no claret ; in either case, the stew is a gastronomical treat—always provided the cook is equal to the task undertaken.

“A HARE PIE, 1734.

“Bone a hare, and shred the meat small ; take almost the same weight in fresh beef suet, shred also. Pound both in a mortar till perfectly mixed. Add salt, two small nutmegs, their weight in cloves, and mace ditto, and a little fine pepper ; let these spices give full aroma to the meat by careful mixing ; put it into a crust and bake it.”

The result is, an aldermanic delicacy for 1859. A few truffles will do no harm ; in fact, ought rarely to be omitted, except to save expense.

## BROILED HARE.

The flavour of broiled hare is particularly fine : the portion to be broiled—the leg—*par excellence*—must be seasoned. Add a little cold butter, and serve very hot.

And now, my good friends, having killed your hare and cooked your hare, may you enjoy all the gastronomical pleasures the timid little animal offers to you, always provided, as I have already explained, you have an artist, whether male or female, of sufficient talent to secure them.

### CHAPTER III.

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“Vive ut Vivas.”

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#### THE PARTRIDGE.

THE first of September, anno domini 1858! and a pleasant morning is it for physical joys, in the sporting line; so all hail and good luck to you, brother sportsmen!

“Enfin, ce jour pompeux, ce heureux jour, nous duit;”

so says M. Corneille. Whether he was a good sportsman or simply a poet, and, like many others, merely a lover of a plump young bird, with bread crumbs, fried in Lucca oil, and well served bread

sauce, I will not pretend to assert ; but there is no question but that the day is to some thousands, aye, tens of thousands, a long-looked-for and a happy one—one how difficult graphically to describe in its memorable and eventful pleasures throughout the length and breadth of our dear Sovereign's dominions.

There may be some gallant old sportsmen, with hearts in the right place, still capable of enjoying sport and its pleasures, both physical and gastronomical, yet with hair as white as my own, and that of the tail of my favourite pony, Necobokher, who can well recall the days of their youth when the week previous to the First of September arrived, and doubly—trebly so, when the actual day arrived.

“Were the boys glad ? or were the boys sorry ?” said Squeers.

Most heartily glad, say I, when the sun rose gloriously on that long-wished-for day ; and bang, “bang, bang !” single and double shots, re-echoed

throughout the length and breadth of the land we live in. For my own part I rarely slept a wink on the night of the 31st of August, till my age was three-score years and eight. Then my good lady got the better of me, and obliged me yearly to take a sleeping draught, asserting that ten o'clock was early enough for any man after sixty, to be walking all day knee deep in wet turnips after timid hares and dear little partridges, savagely destroying them; and possibly, dear creature! she was right.

Nevertheless, if she could not partake in the physical pleasures, she was a rare hand at the gastronomical ones. And woe betide the cook, male or female, who made a culinary mistake, when the question of birds for the second course was discussed either on the 1st or the 2nd of September, for she always insisted on a brace being cooked on those days. Moreover, the good woman, who in early life-time was wont to pick the merrythought

of a six-months-old bird, as if she lived on air in later years, hailed the arrival of a well-packed box of grouse from the Highlands, as does an alderman of the city of London a game pie from Yorkshire.

And if they speak the truth, who is there, that possesses neither grouse grounds nor turnip fields or well-preserved pheasant coverts, who does not delight at the arrival of a well-packed basket of game, more particularly a sportsman who, from duties or circumstances, is deprived the pleasure of shooting it? For my part, I wish my friends would be more liberal to me for all the pleasures I give them in reading these chapters. In the meantime let us talk a little with the partridges.

I have heard it said that the red-legged partridge affords greater sport than the common bird. I do not assert to the contrary, for I confess never to have had much acquaintance with these gentlemen, and I have always considered them as foreigners.

It is, however, certainly a much finer and handsomer bird as far as the plumage is concerned, moreover larger—more to eat, in fact, and keeps longer—and, 'tis said, more difficult to kill. There are many in Norfolk and Essex, but sportsmen do not admire them; moreover, they kill the common ones.

In the islands of the Mediterranean, in France, in Greece and Turkey, and in all the islands of the Archipelago, they are very plentiful; and I confess to having eaten them constantly during the season—roasted, *aux choux*, and so forth—and have tasted them, forsooth, when served on the table even during the months of June and July, at which period Lord Avanley—no bad judge—was wont to say a partridge should be eaten: and eat them he did. <sup>\*</sup> I cannot agree with him.

There are no game laws, be it remembered, in the above-named outlandish places, save France. All is fair game that can be turned into a penny. And as

to gastronomical pleasures, my amiable sporting friends, and mental enjoyers of the things that are really good, which means refined eaters, what on earth, or in the sea, can be expected from heathens who live during the summer on cucumbers, and in the winter on Rahathlacom? To such persons the red-legged or cardinal bird may possibly be also considered preferable in a gastronomical point of view. Comparisons are odious—therefore I declare they know nothing about the matter. There is not a man with a palate, in all Europe, who, in the question of eating, will not decide in favour of our common bird—our dear little, plump little, sport-giving, bread-sauce companion.

Many may think this is a gastronomic heresy, having always heard to the contrary; and having believed it, without practical proofs to the contrary, it is difficult, nay painful, to get over a long-rooted opinion. Such persons should be forced to eat

all the red-legged birds offered for sale; they are all foreigners, or foreign bred, though many, as I have said, are killed in Essex or Norfolk, having crossed the little briny ditch which divides us from our Gallic neighbours, who, for the most part—I do not wish to be illnatured—know nothing relative to sporting, though they are unquestionably up to a thing or two as regards eating. Although in the matter of partridges they also commit the great error of preferring the red-legged, possibly that the brown bird is more scarce with them; yet if so, why does red stocking fetch a higher price? The *restaurant* values it at fifty per cent. higher.

But all this proves nothing. I have made the experiment scores of times at my own table; the two birds have been served together, and those capable—mark you, this is an important word, *capable*, from the chasteness of palate and taste—

of testing their separate merits, have invariably and unanimously given an honourable verdict in favour of the common bird, as possessing more flavour, juice, and aroma. Try again, you who judge otherwise : forget your ancient prejudices, beautiful red feet and beautiful plumage will go for nothing in the judgment you will pronounce. These things are not eaten.

Partridge is said not to be easily digested. It has also other inconveniences, and, as the fair sex are not given to classics, I quote the following lines : those who are may read on—defend me from classical female scholar with a sharp nose—

“ Nimirum crudam si ad læta cubilia portas.

Perdicem, incoetaque agitas genetalia coena,

Heu ! tunc effundis semen, nec idonea pulchrum

Materiet fundabit opus—Sis te ergo per horas

Saltem aliquot.”

Certain gourmets assert their power of distin-

guishing, from taste, the thigh on which the partridge rests, and declare that it is far more tender, eats better, and has a far higher flavour. I have often seriously endeavoured to make this trial; but I have never been enabled distinctly to discover any difference. I, therefore, conclude there is some fault in my palate or digestive organs, which have not all the sensitiveness they ought to have.

It is a most delicious dish—a well and properly-roasted partridge; but it is necessary that none of the juicy flavour should be allowed to escape from its plump body: and the bread-sauce and fried bread-crumbs, its necessary accompaniments, should be served hot, and prepared with an art that such simple dishes, above all others, require. The French—no bad judges in such matters—inclose the body of the partridge, when roasting, in a vine-leaf. This is no bad plan, as securing alike the aroma as the succulence.

I am well aware, as must be all the reading world, that Doctor Pedro Recio de Agguero did not permit Sancho Panza to eat partridge, founding his orders on the aphorism of Hippocrates—

“*Omnis saturatio mala, perdix autem pessima.*”

Yet, as the Doctor refused other delicacies at the same time, such as tarts and sweets, little attention ought to be paid to such authority, and far less to that of Hippocrates.

I would, therefore, strongly recommend all my friends to shoot partridges. The air and exercise causes physical joys untold : they must be practically felt, to be fully estimated. I would further strongly suggest the eating of them at all fitting times, and under all gastronomical circumstances most conducive to inter-physical enjoyment.

The mode and manner of so doing, your artist will best judge in accordance with, and due regard

to, the age, condition, and size of the bird. Always bear in mind, however, that Burgundy of the best is the wine with which the gastronomical indulgence should be refreshed. Having none, try good Bordeaux. Your position being such that neither is procurable, bitter ale is nectar to a thirsty throttle, and, moreover, assists digestion. I take it for granted you are neither a T-totaller—how do you spell the word?—nor a water-drinker. For the one or the other partridges were never hatched.

It is said—and, doubtless, what is said is meant to be truth, although practical experience, or I may more correctly say practical knowledge, does not permit me to recommend the proceeding—that a distinguished gourmand never eats partridges without orange-juice : having no oranges, a lemon is substituted, or rather permitted ; but, when possible, use a sour orange. The question is, therefore,

an open one to all the world gastronomical. In the meantime, the following little *historiette*, touching the use of the orange, may have its value, awaiting the physical and gastronomical pleasures afforded by the woodcock and the pheasant. It is thus told :

A travelling painter had been retained at a convent to take the portrait of its patron saint. His work being finished, was greatly admired, and placed over the altar with great pomp, with the following inscription in gold letters underneath :—  
“*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.*” The painter was thanked, overpowered with praises, words are cheap enough, but very badly paid. This naturally exasperated him, as he well knew the convent was rich, and determined him to be revenged.

In order to effect his purpose, he got up during the night, rubbed out a portion of the portrait, and set to work again. With a few artistical touches,

the figure, previously represented as in prayer, was converted into a monk sitting on a sofa. Before him was a well-covered table, on which, placed under his very nose, was a roast partridge, the steaming odour of which promised to the happy expectant positive gastronomic joy. And in the hands previously closed in the attitude of prayer, was seen a fine orange, which he was in the act of squeezing with much gratification. The following day the monks found this picture still over the altar; the inscription, however, unlike the picture, remained unaltered, "*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.*"

I take it for granted that every individual having the right to the name of "cook," can roast a partridge, fry bread-crumbs of the smallest size in the most delicate oil, and concoct bread sauce, with the slightest aroma of onion therein; and with these additions, if the bird be plump, young, neither too

"Ad Maiorem  
Dei Gloriam!"





fresh nor too high—which means in plain English stale—who dare deny the food is undeniable when hot, and most appetisant when cold?

Partridge soup it was never my good fortune to discuss; but I see no reason why it should not be as good as grouse soup—in fact, connoisseurs give it the preference, both as regards delicacy of taste and refinements. There are, in fact, a variety of excellent modes of serving the bird, which is fully equal to the demands gastronomical made on it by man, as is it of the physical pleasures it allows to man in the field. I shall simply add, however, in conclusion to this chapter, a receipt for a raised partridge pie, which in itself calls for the highest encomiums of every sportsman and gastronome in the land we live in.

#### PARTRIDGE PIE.

The following receipt for the concoction of a

partridge pie is one of undoubtedly gastronomical excellence ; moreover, it has the great virtue of preservation. Thus, any person rejoicing in the possession of a first-rate artist and a well-stocked game preserve, may, in the generosity of his heart, if he have one, chance to recollect that he has some less fortunate but not less amiable friends than himself, and desire the said artist to select from his overabundantly stocked larder sundry brace of birds ; and having used them as I am about to direct, pay the carriage, and thus alike convey the proof of his good will and of his partridge pies throughout the length and breadth of the land we live in.

For example :—

Take your partridges, and bone them. Make some good force, and fill the partridges with it ; put a good-sized truffle into each partridge, having first peeled it. Raise the pie ; lay a few first rate veal cutlets in the bottom, and a thick layer of force, then the partridges, and four truffles to each bird ; then cover the partridges and truffles with delicate slices of Wiltshire bacon. The pie will take four hours' baking.

The gravy for this pie, to be added when baked, may appear somewhat an important and expensive addition; bear in mind, however, I have already stated that such pies ought to be provided by rich friends for poor ones; and the pie, if so made, will keep for three months after being cut.

Now for the gravy :—

Cut one pound of lean ham for each brace of birds, into thin slices; put it in to the stew with the bones and giblets of the partridges and an old fowl, some thyme and parsley, a little mace, and four-and-twenty shallots; add a pint of stock. Set the stewpan on a stove to drain down for half an hour, then add three quarts of good stock; let it simmer till it is reduced to one pint. Add good sherry. When the pie has been out of the oven for half an hour, pour it in, and let it stand full twenty-four hours ere a gastronomical pleasure so perfect is enjoyed.

Partridges are good roasted, boiled, stewed, in Salmis, broiled, hashed, and cold; the excellence, however, consisting not less in the flavour of the

bird than in the talent of the artist into whose hands it is delivered. Many assert that these birds are valueless in grass countries; and I have heard that Leicestershire partridges are never dressed at Belvoir Castle.

A partridge, as our allies are wont to eat it, simply "au choux," or stewed with cabbage, to speak our mother tongue, can be eaten with much internal gratification. In fact, a partridge, more particularly about Christmas time, is a most distinguished food.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### THE PHEASANT.

THERE are very many first-rate sportsmen who consider pheasant and woodcock-shooting (I combine the two, though totally dissimilar) the finest sport on earth. A pheasant they estimate as the king, the woodcock the prince of game. They speak of partridges, hares, and rabbits with carelessness, as were they born to be shot and eaten every day throughout the year: when the pheasant is alluded to, however, it is named as "the noble bird," and treated with all due respect; and the woodcock is scarcely less prized. Gastronomically speaking, there is great cause for such respect,

though, individually, I confess not to have so great an admiration, even when recollecting the amount of pleasure these beautiful birds afford to the inward man, as many a far better sportsman may have ; neither do I think that, physically speaking, in the sporting acceptation of the term, they afford such gratification in the field as do partridges and dear little snipes, hereafter to be alluded to.

Foreigners speak of pheasants as some would of golden eagles. Of this I am not surprised, as they meet with comparatively so few, either on their tables or in their coverts. Moreover, fine feathers make fine birds ; and possibly the tail, like that of O'Connell in other days, has its influence, as they have the vulgar and abominable habit of serving it at table with the tail feathers in. Avoid this, ye cooks, as ought young ladies a red petticoat with thick ancles.

Nevertheless, for choice as for sport, both as re-

gards the killing and the pleasure of seeing your dogs hunt, give me a walk in the stubble and the turnips. Be not alarmed, however, ye lovers of a plain roasted pheasant, with its accompaniments, as to the partridge, of bread-sauce and fried bread-crumbs! or ye lovers of a still greater gastronomic indulgence—a truffled pheasant! Neither the one nor the other is to be despised under any circumstances: so let me commence with a word touching the gastronomical qualities of this handsome game-bird; for in truth, if it be a splendid bird to shoot at, it is not less so as a decoration to your larder or a delicacy on your table. Long life to pheasants! I was about to say, one is so accustomed to desire a long existence for all that is good; but in this case I must change my tone, for I confess—and who does not?—that I prefer them dead in my larder, or dead on the board, and that board not a sideboard.

I have been told, although I have never been

favoured with the practical illustration, that a pheasant, when killed by a bird of prey, is far better, gastronomically speaking, than one which dies under any other circumstance. This may be the case ; but, as I said before, I never had the gastro-nomic advantage of proving the result. Possibly, the effect on the nerves of the animal, when pounced on by one of its own race, may produce aromatic virtues to its flesh as yet unknown to me.

This superb bird—for superb it really is, when hung up in your larder—should never be abandoned without due reflection to the capricious arrangement either of a he or she—pardon me! male or female—who appropriate to themselves unworthily the name of cook, as I have already endeavoured to prove, when offering themselves even as second-rate artists in the culinary department of the world's requirements : if so, be assured, the bird will be roasted two days too soon or two days too late, in

accordance with his or her ignorance, or the number or quality of your guests. The pheasant should be roasted on the day it should be eaten, and on no other. If your friends are invited on that day, so much the better for them : if not, eat it yourself.

Some people hang them up by the legs ; and when from the bird two or three drops of blood are seen to fall, assert that it is then in a fit state for those who do not like it a wee bit gamey, commonly called “high”—that is, high-tasting ; more properly speaking, of high or strong flavour and odour. Others hang them up by the tail ; and when the pheasant falls to the ground, they judge it to be in a fit state for gastronomical indulgence. Others, again — possibly the minority — no bad judges either of what ought to be, though more difficult to please—declare that, in order to be in a perfect state for the spit, a pheasant should be kept until it change its position without aid (you will under-

stand me: if not, permit me to say, till it is “alive” again. With these gentlemen, without questioning their taste, I should decline to dine.

If the pheasant be a splendid bird to shoot, as many first-rate sportsmen decide that it is, it is also an ornament to your larder; and a brace or two constitute a most acceptable present to those who can only purchase them at a game-shop; moreover, unquestionably, a handsome dish at the second course, and by no means a bad one, in a more humble establishment, at the first. A roast pheasant also eats well, cold or broiled, about breakfast-time; and delicate persons do not object to it, roasted and hot, at luncheon.

In fact, we are no longer in the time of the Emperor Heliogabalus, who, from ostentation, or stupid prodigality, or bad taste, or want of a good cook, fed the lions of his menagerie on pheasants. We feed ourselves, and very good food it is for the

lions of Old England—so good, that many first-rate gastronomes declare, particularly “our allies in peg-top trousers,” that the bird should not be eaten as other delicacies are eaten, but with a certain solemnity; neither is it without consideration that a subject of such importance should be dismissed.

To be treated gastronomically, it should be delicately treated. Feeling myself, therefore, as not loving the bird gastronomically so well as the December partridge, and therefore scarcely equal to the depths of a subject of such grave importance to all sportsmen, and, indeed, every man, woman, and adult living with a jaw and a throat and a palate, venture to borrow a page from that cheering “*plat*,” “The Physiology of Taste” :—

“The pheasant,” says that illustrious author, “is an enigma of which the name is only revealed to adepts; they alone know how to relish it in all

its goodness. This bird, when it is eaten within three days subsequent to its death, has nothing to distinguish it. It is neither so delicate as a spring chicken, nor has it the delicate flavour of a quail; but cooked at the proper time, its flesh is tender—sublime; its high flavour combining that of poultry and of venison. The time so desirable to select is that when the bird commences decomposition; it is then the flavour develops itself, and is mixed with an oil which requires a little fermentation to exalt it, as the cup of coffee, which is only obtained by torrefaction. This moment is made known to the uninitiated by a slight odour, or change of colour in the breast of the bird; but the inspired divine it by instinct. A clever cook decides with the glance of an eye the moment when the bird should be taken from the spit or allowed a few turns more. When the pheasant is perfectly fit, pluck it—not sooner; then lard it with

great care, selecting the primest and freshest bacon."

Now, as regards the hare, so say I with the pheasant. Piggy and game have no possible gastronomic relation: piggy and poultry, piggy and calf, bacon and eggs. But this larding is neither artistical nor sportsmanlike. However, doctors differ, and ever will so in the matter of eating, as in that of physicking, I do not presume to dictate, only to suggest; however, it is by no means an indifferent question, that of plucking a pheasant at the proper time. Experience has proved that those which are kept longest in their feathers are of better flavour than those which have been plucked even the previous night to the cooking, inasmuch as the air neutralizes a portion of the flavour, so that the juice intended to nourish the plumage dries up and injures the flesh.

"Your bird being plucked," says the author to

whom I have referred, "it should be stuffed in the following manner:—Take two woodcocks, and divide the flesh into one portion, the trail and liver into another. With this meat you make a stuffing by mincing, and mixing it with some beef marrow, a small quantity of scraped bacon, pepper, salt, and herbs; add truffles sufficient to fill up the remaining portion of the inside of the pheasant." Be careful to secure this stuffing so that none of it escape, which is difficult when the bird has been kept long. Nevertheless there are several ways of obtaining your object, and among others, that of placing a crust of bread over the orifice, and attaching it with a thread. Prepare a slice of bread an inch thick, on which the bird rests on its length; then take the trail and livers of the woodcocks and mix them with truffles, an anchovy, some grated bacon, and a morsel of fresh butter; cover the bird with this paste, so that it shall be

soaked through with the juice which melts while roasting.

When the pheasant is done, serve it on the toast, surrounded with slices of orange, and be satisfied as to the event.

Now this delicious meat should, in preference, be washed down, or rather refreshed, with some of the finest Burgundy, which I have fully decided, after long experience, is the wine *par excellencé* for game. Having no Burgundy, Bourdeaux is by no means to be despised.

A pheasant thus cooked is food for the woman you love, who, for the time being, is of course an angel. Already distinguished by its own flavour, it imbibes throughout the savoury and delicious odour which escapes from the woodcock and the truffles. The toast, rich in itself, is impregnated in threefold combination by the juices which run through the bird while cooking; and

thus, among all these good things, not an atom escapes its full appreciation. Indeed, such a dish is fit for the table of the most distinguished gastronome.

In other days—days which were termed “the good old days,” and so were they in a gastronomical point of view—when corporations were unreformed, the portly aldermen of Bristol were said to be the best *feeders* in England. Certain was it that the turtle soup of Bristol was, and I fancy is to this day, considered unrivalled ; and this fact, doubtless derived from excess of practical experience, together with the knowledge that their gastronomical indulgences were supplied at the expense of the public, caused them to be tolerably handy with their knives and forks.

Now it is asserted — I cannot swear to the fact, not having heard it myself—that one of these amiable individuals did on one occasion,

when gorged to repletion, turn to the servant who stood at his elbow and exclaim—"John, I will give you a guinea for your appetite;" and on another, when the turtle was doubtless more excellent than usual, he again exclaimed, after a long-drawn sigh—"Oh! that my throat were a mile long, and every inch a palate."

Now I very much question if such an individual—for I look on him more in the glutton than the gastronomic line—would or could rightly estimate the gastronomical pleasure of sitting down to a pheasant "cooked," in the true acceptation of the term, as I have described it. Inasmuch as animals feed, man eats; but the man of mind alone knows how to eat. If he could estimate it, he surely would have desired to have stretched his throat to a league, with a palate in proportion.

There are numerous receipts, adapted by gas-

tronomical artists, for the cooking of a pheasant, with which my practical experiences would permit me to refer with great satisfaction. As I by no means, however, consider that my little treatise on Sport—pleasurable and gastronomical, or physical, if you will it—can be constituted a cookery book, I shall confine myself to four *Imprimis*; then, having already introduced my readers to the truffled pheasant, I would say that, to enjoy the bird to the fullest extent of its own gastronomical virtues, it should be eaten as a plain roast, with first-rate bread-sauce.

However, it is by no means to be supposed that the individual, commonly called “cook,” has the power, or can attain the power, of roasting a pheasant as a pheasant only should be roasted. I will therefore simply suggest that it should neither be toasted or baked, or overdone or underdone, but done to a turn, so as to secure the succulence

and admirable aroma of the bird, without making it a dry chip. And, above all, avoid the Gaellic fashion of larding.

A boiled pheasant is also most agreeable food, if not spoilt by your cook. Boil it simply as you would a neck of mutton—with plenty of water: do not underboil it or overboil it; and, when fit for gastronomical discussion, serve, while hot and plump, as a hen turkey polt, with the addition of some well-made cream celery-sauce. Without having good celery and good cream at hand, never presume to attempt a boiled pheasant.

To end, however, as I began—with a rare gastronomical treat—I should recommend a forced pheasant. The word speaks for itself—the bird must be boned, and then stuffed with forced-meat, and subsequently submitted to the process of the stew-pan. Excellent is it when hot — super-excellent when cold; moreover, it will keep in

your larder, if a good one, or permit a day or even two days' travelling to the table of your friends.

Recollect, however, the great point is the selection of the bird to be forced, and the concoction of the forced-meat, the receipt for which I add. Cocks are, I should say, preferable to hens for this culinary process.

Mince in the finest possible manner some of the lean of a griskin of pork, adding a similar portion of fillet of veal, truffles at discretion, fine pepper, salt, and a glass of the finest cognac. Mix these ingredients with yoke of egg, and flour to form the substance of dough ; do not spare the truffles. A small quantity of the finest fresh butter will be a desirable addition—but only a small quantity. If at hand a little ox tongue may be added.

Try this receipt, my good friends, for breakfast, on New Year's morning, and the recollection of the gastronomical pleasures afforded will be a solace throughout the year.

## CHAPTER V.

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“In congregated flight  
The woodcock comes, in milder climes to seek  
A temporary refuge from the jaws  
Of wide devouring famine, all unskilled,  
To dread the death that still his path pursues.”

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### THE WOODCOCK.

UNTIL such time as the Emperor of all the Russias fell out with the Sultan Abjul, Light of the World, and the most sensual spendthrift of his age, and England, as usual, put her finger in the pie, with the aid of France, to complete the hash *à la Sevastopol*, I confess that I was but slightly acquainted with the varied physical and gastronomical pleasures afforded to that restless biped, man, by the

interesting and innocent little bird, called woodcock, by no means, save in name, the cock of the wood, yet, I fancy, by the majority of the Société Gastronomique, generally considered one of the most select and precious morsels ever delivered into the hands of a culinary genius to prepare for the mouth of man. I confess that I am not in that majority. What then? We only come back to the same question touched on in Chapter I. Some like apples, others “onions.” And, above all, I suggest you never ask an opiniative obstinate—man or woman—to dine with you. Nothing on earth so easily affects digestion and destroys the social pleasures of a gastronomical treat, to which none, no, not one, high or low, rich or poor, sportsman or alderman, prince or beggar, are averse. In illustration of such fact, permit me to quote an extract from an American paper, which recently came to my notice:—

“ ‘How do you like it here?’ asked an inspector of a poor-house of one of his male charges.

“ ‘Pretty well, sir,’ he replied, ‘as regards the fare, but you might do better about the clothes.’

“ ‘Ah!’

“ ‘If I should be allowed to state my preferences,’ continued the pauper, ‘I should say, Give me Boston for its table, Portsmouth for its wardrobe, and Concord for general freedom, extending to the refinements, gastronomical and social, of life. I have tried them all, sir; and if ever you come to it you will find just what I tell you.’ ”

Exit pauper, enter woodcock.

In Spain it is termed *Gallina ciega*, or blind fowl, in which the Dons make a trifling error, as do they in many other cases, inasmuch as these birds are more wide awake than others, since they see better during the twilight than in broad daylight; owls

and bats do the same, but neither are blind, very far from it.

“Cum nemus omne suo, vividi spoliator honore,  
Præda est facilis et amoena scalopax.”

NEMESIANUS.

There are several species or variety of the bird called woodcock; they are, however, all of a similar nature, have the same habits, and are met with in the same localities nearly at the same season. Moreover, they afford to the sportsman considerable physical pleasures. Far be it from me to assert the same when speaking gastronomically. Down in the far, the far west, that is, the west of Old England, in those pleasant sporting grounds, called Devon and Cornwall, woodcocks are not seldom tumbled over in the golden, beer-brewing, pheasant-shooting, walnut-cracking, convivial, hospitable, jovial, jolly month of October; but the bleak, foggy, dull, bilious, damp, and chilly month of November, is

the period when the physical and gastronomical pleasures of the bird are followed *con amore*. During the latter month I have shot a bird or two ;

“ Nor plumper or fatter,  
Ere smoked on a dish  
Or was served on a platter ;”

and, forsooth, I have bought many a couple for three shillings and sixpence, or even less, in Newton market, and finer birds I have rarely witnessed, though, in truth, my purchases have been generally made for my friends rather than self, inasmuch as the buying of game causes me very different feelings from those of eating it. In London, during the same month, these birds have brought ten shillings a couple, remarkable neither for flavour nor size. In Paris I am told as much as eight francs are paid for a single bird, and ten at a restaurateur's.

Woodcocks are, however, to be had all over the

world, in the ancient as in the new, in Siberia as in Senegal, from the Land's End to John o' Groat's house, from the city of the Sultan to the city of the Czar ; and, moreover, wherever they are, they are considered as offering immense gastronomical pleasure and excellent physical sport. Nevertheless, I assert that the bird shot in the north is as superior to the bird shot in the south, as regards the eating, as chalk from cheese, and equally superior as regards the sport it affords ; in due proportion is the price of the bird in the different markets.

At Constantinople, in Greece, in the Islands of the Archipelago, in all the Ionian Islands, in Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, they abound ; and while at many periods the shooting of them is very indifferent sport, the eating has little gastronomic indulgence ; in the east, in fact, the birds are for the most part thin and poor, and dry as a deal board. I have frequently bought them for eight-

pence and even fourpence each ; and rarely have I known them, even at Constantinople—which, in the present day, I believe to be the most expensive city in Europe, whatever it might have been previous to the war—dearer than a shilling.

During the season, and, I regret to say, out of the season also, day after day have I seen these birds, so highly prized by gastronomes, served at the tables on board the steamers of the Messagerie Imperiale Company, between Marseilles and Constantinople, as far as gastronomical indulgence is concerned, the very worst and most unjustly provided boats in Europe ; but the result has been a slightly burned up animal with legs and wings, cooked apparently without, and not cooked at all within, kept too long in order to give it a flavour, which from poor-ness of flesh it could never boast of, and consequently the effluvia of the bird was disgusting

—too disgusting for any one to eat it but a Frenchman.

I have heard it observed that a woodcock should fly through the kitchen, look at the parlour fire, and then settle on the dish prepared for its reception, thus causing the matter of refinement in the culinary art to be all but cannibalism. As well might a sportsman take a piece of salt and toast in his pocket, and eat the bird warm as it falls from the gun. Nevertheless, I have seen woodcocks discussed, particularly by our Gallic neighbours, all but raw.

Now it is in truth an excellent bird when plump and properly cooked, and always preferable during frost. These birds should never be drawn. By pounding woodcocks in a mortar, a most delicious *purée* is obtained, and if on such *purée* you place the wings of partridges *piquées*, the happiest culinary result is obtained. The woodcock should

not be eaten too fresh, otherwise its flavour will not be sufficiently developed. You will have meat without taste or delicacy. Cooked as a Salmis you secure a most agreeable gastronomical pleasure. The perfume of the bird associates charmingly with that of truffles.

When roasting (the French say with a breastplate of lard—always piggy—I cannot agree with them) it should be watched over by the eye of an undoubted artist, if not two. A woodcock too much done is worthless; a woodcock raw is worse; a woodcock, in fact, should be done to a turn, and placed on a toast black and unctuous from the trail; it is then a most delicate and delicious morsel. Men of genius, in fact, consider it the highest gastronomical pleasure permitted to man; and if he take the precaution to bring out the flavour and soften the aroma by some first-rate Bordeaux, he may flatter himself that he has dined well.

Monsieur ——, President of the Tribunal of

Avignon, in France, had on one occasion dined with the Préfet, at least so my friend Blazé informed me. In the double capacity of a distinguished gourmand and of an intrepid sportsman, he performed his part admirably in both capacities; he spoke of the number of partridges, hares, and woodcocks he had bagged, and moreover ate heartily of the good dinner provided. Having taken his coffee to facilitate digestion, and swallowed his third little glass of curaçoa to qualify the passage of the coffee, his host requested to be informed whether he had dined well.

“Why, yes,” he replied.

This answer appeared to be accompanied with restriction.

“Eh! no; I have dined well enough.”

“Well enough signifies nothing.”

“Yes, yes; I have dined very well.”

“I can understand you, my friend,” said the

Préfet ; “you regret those fine woodcocks which left the table untouched.”

“Why, yes, I could have eaten my share.”

“Wait a moment, and they shall be served for you.”

“After the coffee? after the liqueur? it is impossible!”

“Nothing is impossible for a stomach like yours.”

The order was given, a small table laid in the adjoining room; the woodcocks were served, and the happy President ate them.

The same respectable magistrate, speaking one day to a friend, said :—

“We have just been eating a superb turkey; it was excellent, stuffed with truffles to the neck, tender, delicate, and of high flavour: we left only the bones.”

“How many of you were there?” said I.

“Two,” he replied.

“Two !”

“Yes ; the turkey and myself.”

I may terminate this chapter by introducing to the notice of all sportsmen the delicate little quail. In my very humble opinion it affords the most delicious eating, of all birds coming under the game species, which it most decidedly does, though many differ on this subject. Under the game laws in England they do not wisely come, as, were such the case, we should be deprived of the very few to be met with, inasmuch as they generally leave both England and France ere the shooting season commences.

Our gallant neighbours, however, in their consummate knowledge of all matters of sport, only a few years since passed a law which decided that a quail was a game bird ; consequently the vast quantities which are sent from Sicily, and Malta, and Alexandria,

during the month of May, when on their passage to Europe, for the warm and fruit season, when they are so thin and dry as to be comparatively of little value to the gastronome, and again in the months of August or September, when returning plump and luscious to the East, are all smuggled on shore or passed as singing birds. Nevertheless, these singing birds secure to the eater one of the highest gastronomical pleasures.

On one occasion that chance and my travels led me from Messina to Marseilles, having purchased about two dozen of these elegant little songsters (alive) for about five shillings at the former place, and having had a fine passage of about fifty-six hours, during which time they were well cared for, and consequently arrived cheerful and lively, I made arrangements with the cook on board, for the matter of a franc, to put them to a peaceable death, on the morning of our entering the port, that I

might pack them in a tin biscuit-box, and the box ditto in my carpet-bag. The captain of the vessel, however, having overheard the gastronomical discussion between white-cap and self, as to the probability of this arrangement securing a quail-pie to my friends in England, whither I was bound in all haste, shrugged up his shoulders as even French captains and colonels can shrug them, and exclaimed, “*Mais, mon cher, c’est défendu : kill them, and they become game. You must land them as nightingales.*”

Nevertheless, they went into the tin box, arrived in England, and were forthwith delivered over to an artist of no mean ability.

Thus, spite of the French game laws — like many others, difficult to understand—the birds that lived, ate, and chirped so prettily on board the good ship Carmel on the morning of Wednesday, were served to perfection in Old England at

dinner on the Friday following, both roasted and in a pie; the remaining half-dozen being converted into a salmis on Saturday; and although the Sabbath intervened, the aroma and agreeable gastronomical pleasures they afforded, both internally and mentally, remained throughout the week.

At the period I name, these delicious little birds were selling at the west end of London at three shillings each.

On another occasion, if memory does not fail me, I found myself at Therapia, on the Bosphorus, on the 17th of December, 1856. On the following morning, the weather being cold and frosty, the good landlord of the hotel where I had taken up my quarters, whose name is Petula, and a most civil and obliging individual is he, as is his hotel one of the best in the East—in fact, the very best my wandering footsteps has ever led me to, in that country—entered my room with six

couple of woodcocks, shot two hours previously. "You leave, sir," said he, "this afternoon for Marseilles, and, weather permitting, will reach London I fancy on the morning of Christmas-day. A few cocks from Asia Minor and the borders of the Bosphorus, I take it, will be an acceptable present to your friends in the West."

"A thousand thanks, my good friend," I replied. "I accept—'Vis me hash, grimgue mere Pasha Newcastle sic,'" at least the Turkish sounds something like it, which meaneth—I believe you, my Pasha: "may they only arrive in time, and fresh enough to be roasted with Newcastle coal."

I started at four that afternoon; the birds, by the advice of the good Petula, were hung up (not touching one another) in the ice-house on board, with a strong recommendation on his part that I should inspect them daily, in order to see that the dirty, smoking, spitting individual on board, who

had deceived himself into the idea, like many others, that he was a cook, and a French cook, should not change my plump fresh birds for his stale lean ones, in which I flatter myself I succeeded, as did I also (not by the seamanship of the individuals who, like the cook, called themselves sailors, or the superiority of the vessel, but by the will of Providence), in reaching Marseilles in due course, and, true to Petula's hope, in London at eight a.m. on the morning of Christmas-day.

I had, however, forgotten in my ignorance that the trains on that day are regulated as Sunday trains; consequently, although I started at ten a.m. for the "Land of the West," and on ordinary days should have been in ample time to have shared the roast turkey and mince pies with those who, knowing my gastronomic tastes, would have helped me to the whole of *les-sots-les-laissent*, or bit we call the eye or oyster of the turkey, night had long closed

on what I consider the threshold of "my home." Ah! what a pleasant word to the ears of a hungry and tired traveller!

"Confound you, and your home too," I hear some impatient reader exclaim: "What became of the woodcocks?"

Patience, my friends: you shall hear the sad tale!

They duly arrived, with my humble self, fresh as larks, or as woodcocks from the Bosphorus, should arrive at Paris. There, meeting with a pleasant sporting and gastronomical friend, he seduced me. Alas! he seduced me thus—just a potage *à la bisque*—a sole *à la Normande*, a *côtelette* and one *bottle* of Chambertin, at Phillip's at four—the hour is early—but there is still time for digestion, and you can start at 7:30. Oh! my friend. Oh! Phillip. Oh! *soles à la Normande*—though you were my woodcocks, lost to me for ever.

The fact was simply as follows:—

On my arrival I had given the box in which they were packed, which was carefully ventilated with holes, to a *garçon*, or, I may say, the *garçon par excellence* of the hotel at which for many years it had been my custom to remain when visiting the metropolis of that country of which Napoleon the Third is the lord and master.

Having, as I have said, however, been seduced to dine at Phillip's, I lingered just a moment too long over my curaçoa and coffee. This moment, however, was fatal to the woodcocks. I had just time to tumble my portmanteau, and myself after it, into a cab, while all the establishment, with the landlord at their head, were looking after the *garçon par excellence*, and my woodcocks in particular. Neither the one nor the other, however, were forthcoming. Alternative I had none, but that of leaving them behind.

Two days after I received the following letter. I give a literal translation :—

“It is with a lively and intense regret that I deplore having to inform you that I have felt myself compelled to dispose of your Woodcocks to my poultry and game merchant at one franc each. Auguste returned ten minutes after your departure, and apprised us that he had placed the unfortunate birds in a garret window for free ventilation. I felt the expense of sending them to Angleterre, together with the chance of their being unfit to eat, would be great, and I therefore hope that Monsieur will consider I have acted wisely.

“With the highest consideration, ———.”

Here let me draw a curtain over this lamentable event, with the hope that whoever ate them enjoyed them.

I do not assert it was the landlord or his guests, or Auguste; but it is a fact. Woodcocks, at the period, were selling in the market of St. Honoré, at twelve francs a couple. “Evil be to him that evil thinks.”

Let us return to the quails. An original once said to me, "How admirable are the ways of Providence! it has caused all the rivers to flow by large towns." It was the first time I ever heard that rivers were made after the towns were built; but never mind the assertion—think as little of it as I do. "We ought to be thankful," continued he, "to that same Providence, as, doubtless for our benefit, the instinct of rambling has been given to certain birds."

Each successive year quails are sent to us, to be roasted, or served *en papillotes*—the only good way of eating them. Some serve them *en salmis*, and in patties. But this is a great mistake; indeed, it is an act of great gastronomical ignorance. The perfume of the quail evaporates the moment it is put into any liquid whatsoever. The flavour no longer exists. You have still a delicate meat, but insipid and tasteless, and no longer a quail.

Admit these sayings to be facts, what are we to do, having several cold roast quails in the house? give them to the cat? Unquestionably not. Roast them again? Bah! Then *salmis* and patties assuredly may be eaten.

There are circumstances, also, when you may permit yourself to eat a boiled quail. It is when in a rough shooting-quarter, or village, or where no artistical means are found for putting culinary talent at work. It is, doubtless, very good, but utterly deficient in the qualities to satisfy a correct appetite. Supposing you have neither time nor patience to roast your birds, and have not all the necessary additions at hand, then pluck and draw your quails, and suspend them by a string over the boiling pot. You will find them passable; and it is, perhaps, a dish that requires the least time.

But this is only an exception which confirms the rule that quails should be eaten roasted; and if you

desire a proof (for there are some who never believe your assertions), you shall have one of great antiquity. The Israelites found them roasted in the desert; and as they apparently had neither guns, pointers, nor cooks, they would scarcely have known what to do with them, had not some hand prepared them, to afford gastronomical pleasure to men. “Nevertheless, these quails could not have been larded,” said a Frenchman, “as the Jews never eat bacon; and were probably not so good as ours, as the larding is indispensable.” “Not a bit of it,” I replied. “The Jews were good judges. You would thrust piggy into a quail, and thus destroy them, as you do most other things, by larding.

This is, in my humble estimation, the bird which, of all others, affords the most delicious gastronomical enjoyment to man. All birds, in fact, ending with “ail”—such as quail and rail, landrail

—furnish the cook with a pleasing task, delicate, and of high flavour. Prepared in the stewpan, their aroma develops itself, though roasted is “the” mode and manner of serving them. If the spit (which is too often the case) should dry them up, from the talent of the spitter, then I recommend their being eaten in *salmis*, seasoned with truffles and mushrooms.

Roasting requires the eye of one who thoroughly understands the art. Never place entire confidence in your cook, as slight circumstances may cause you disappointment. Your quail or your rail may be overdone; and in such case neither you nor your friends can hope for a gastronomical treat.

In conclusion, I have heard a Frenchman, who was decidedly no bad judge in reference to the refined enjoyments derived from high gastronomical indulgence, thus express himself in reference to the merits of the woodcock, dead, cooked, and set be-

fore an expectant appetite ; though, mark me, as in the shooting, so in the cooking, I am by no means of opinion that, as regards “game,” we derive any benefit from the French, inasmuch as an English cook—understand me, a “cook,” not a pretender, whether male or female—can beat our Gallic neighbours in the matter of cooking game, in the same ratio as we should thrash them, were they to attempt any little absurdity in the way of an invasion.

“The woodcock, or *bécasse*,” said this illustrious connoisseur, “is the first on the list of gastronomical indulgences, of the feathered tribe denominated ‘game,’ not only from its aroma, but also from the succulence of its flesh, so prized by all who are judges of gastronomical excellence.”

A woodcock roasted is the most distinguished dish one can offer to a person of high consideration ; in fact, it is the highest mark of your respect and esteem. A gastronome venerates the precious dish to

such a degree, that he desires to prove his appreciation by tendering it the highest honours. Suffice it, that even its trail is previously preserved on toast, and eaten with respect by the most enlightened amateurs.

The woodcock may also be served in *salmis*, forced, with truffles, with olives, *à l'espagnole*, and, with the aid of a mortar, pounded into a delicious *purée*, as a foundation to a dish of *coutlets*. This *purée*, which, if properly treated, requires the highest degree of artistical talent, is, without question, the most delicious dish which can honour the table of a man of taste. Heretofore it was a dish reserved for the episcopal bench. He of Oxford probably now dines on boiled mutton : it is to be hoped that Exeter follows his example. I, therefore, scarcely know who are worthy of its merits, save it be my readers.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### WILD DUCKS AND SNIPES.

“Now has stern winter reared his icy throne  
High o’er the prostrate world, and reigns uncheck’d  
In gorgeous majesty severely bright !  
Beneath his furious sway, the trembling earth  
Submissive sinks ; hill, vale, and wood, and stream  
Smiling and vocal once, now mute and sad.

\* \* \* \*

The snipe, though sorely pinched, and half reduced  
In bulk, still braves the year ; with prying bill  
Bores the light cover’d stream, and should it fail,  
By hunger tam’d, drops in the trickling drain  
Near dreaded man’s abode.

\* \* \* \*

Down close ! the wild ducks come, and darting down  
Throw up on every side the troubled wave,  
Then gaily swim around with idle play.  
With breath restrained and palpitating heart  
I view their movements.

\* \* \* \*

With fiery burst,  
The unexpected death invades the flock ;  
Trembling they lie, and beat the plashing pool,  
While those, remoter from the fatal range  
Of the swift shot, mount up on vigorous wing,  
And wake the sleeping echoes as they fly.”

ANONYMOUS.

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I BELIEVE there are few, if any, men living, who  
could tell more than has Colonel Hawker of the

physical pleasures of wild-fowl shooting, in the category of which I may include wild ducks, widgeon, teal, &c.; and to those, more particularly my younger sporting friends, who ought to learn these pleasures ere they can fully estimate the gastronomical ones, I would strongly recommend a perusal of so practical, and in every sense so sporting, a work, which has already attained to many editions. I would also name some very agreeable papers which have from time to time appeared in the *Sporting Magazine*, evidently from the pen of a thorough sportsman—master of the art—though at the present moment I cannot recollect the author's name.

It must, indeed, be glorious sport, that of wild-fowl shooting, to those who have the health and stamina to endure weather the most severe, fatigue and excitement the most intense. I honestly confess that I have neither—would

that I had! I should not neglect the ducks. The following simple, yet by no means unpoetical lines, taken from the pages of *Maga*, were said to be from the pen of a Hampshire farmer's son, who was devoted to wild-fowl shooting—moreover, said to be written only two days previous to his sad death, which occurred when in the pursuit of his favourite sport; he was found six weeks after being missed, buried in the mud, at the entrance of the Solent. Mere verses though they may be termed by some, they nevertheless illustrate with much truthfulness that wild-fowl shooting and pheasant shooting are physical pleasures as wide apart as the poles:—

“Bent on his sport, he heeds nor wet nor cold,  
Nor threatening storms nor dangers of each kind;  
Hope shields his breast against the chance of fate,  
And fortunes gives him fortitude of mind.

\* \* \* \*

“The wandering flocks, expelled from northern shores,  
In varied forms pursue their trackless way,  
Courting the genial aspect of the south,  
Whilst iron Winter holds his despot sway.

“’Tis now the fowler mans his little bark,  
Equipped with gun, and dog of sturdiest strain,  
Prepared to weather the relentless blast  
To deal destruction ’mid the feathered train.”

Nevertheless, I repeat my conviction that to those capable of facing these severe physical pleasures they stand very high in the list of field sports.

I have heard Frenchmen, speaking of wild ducks, say there are a few that remain and make their nests in France; adding, that the desire of such idle birds appears simply that of affording to the gastronome the ineffable delight of eating a bird of such exquisite flavour as a very young wild duck.

Now, birds of passage though they be, I hold that there are very many such idle birds in England—nay, thousands of birds hatched annually in this country. I have eaten a green goose—that is to say, shared in the eating of one, not having precisely the appetite and digestive powers of the President of the tribunal of Avignon—but it has

never been my good fortune, as far as I am aware, to take part in the discussion of a wild duckling. I cannot, therefore, presume to decide as to the gastronomical delights afforded thereby, or the exquisite flavour it is said to possess. Neither can I, having due regard to the health, comfort, and internal gratifications of my readers, express the strong opinion of many others as regards the high gastronomical estimation in which this bird is held. That it forms an excellent addition to your table, granted—and I have already said affords admirable and most exciting sport: but the wild is not, in my humble opinion, the duck of ducks or the dish of dishes. Varron gives to the wild duck the name of *quassa gipenna*, probably from the noise it makes when rising.

And it is a remarkable fact that teal, wild ducks, plovers, lapwings—all in their several excellencies securing gastronomical pleasures to man—

are sent by Providence at the very period of the year when the earth is the most unfruitful ; whereas strange birds which arrive during the fruit season have, generally speaking, only ungastronomical, though pleasurable, relations with us ; in fact, they are musicians sent to charm us with their song, though some of these songsters make admirable *salmis* and excellent pies. Recollect nightingales have tongues as well as oxen. Thus the birds of the north are the gifts of the north winds, as are the nightingales the gifts of the zephyrs.

The wild duck is, perhaps, the species of game the most known all over the world. Abandon a man in any part of the earth ; give him a gun, powder, and shot, and he will kill wild ducks for his food. Robinson Crusoe illustrates this fact. All that I have said in reference to wild ducks applies to teal, and in general to all water fowls. The wild duck is considered of a far higher flavour,

gastronomically speaking, and far more savoury than the tame duck. As regards this point, however, sportsmen differ as well as doctors; whether roasted plain with mushrooms, or *en salmis* with truffles, or olives, the wild duck is unquestionably a most distinguished meal. Again opinions vary.

I confess a young duck and green peas is not to be sneezed at. Nevertheless, one thing is certain—wild-duck shooting is a first-rate sport, and wild-duck eating a most agreeable undertaking; in fact, a duck hunt is, under all circumstances, preferable to a “wild goose chase.”

The greatest treat in the wild fowl species is, perhaps, the poachard or dun bird, a species of wild fowl supposed to inhabit the Caspian Sea, and caught (at least such was formerly the case) only in a single decoy on the Misley Hall estate, Essex, in the month of January, in the coldest years. Their flesh offers a gastronomical treat, alike exquisitely

tender and delicate ; indeed, it may be said almost to melt in the mouth, which is asserted as regards the canvas-back duck of America ; but they have little of the common wild duck flavour, and are best eaten in their own gravy, which is plentiful. Their size is about that of a fine widgeon.

The dotterel is also highly and deservedly valued by the epicure. Duck, in fact, taken as a sporting bird, or taken as a tame bird, or taken as a word of affection, such as “you duck,” “you darling duck,” “you duck of ducks,” is a word which creates in the heart of woman far other joys than the mere pleasures derived from gastronomical thoughts engendered by sage and onions.

Snipe shooting, though by no means a physical pleasure of that remarkable excitement and fatigue which constitutes the pursuit of the wild duck, offers admirable sport, and is followed with the keenest of zests. Moreover, he who goes forth in

pursuit of the wild fowl is not seldom gratified by the presence of the snipe ; and when pursued alone, solely for the little bird in question, it is a most agreeable pastime. I speak solely of the sport it affords in due season.

This little bird, to all gastronomes a most precious addition to the table, resembles the woodcock in its plumage, as does it in an equal degree differ in its habits and actions. As a general rule, wherever you find the former never seek the latter, although there are exceptions to the best regulated rule.

Bourgainville found snipes in the Malonnes Isles, and ascertained that they possessed habits different from those which we deem them to have in Europe. As there is nothing to disturb them in such latitudes, they make their nests in the open country, and consequently afford not one-third of the physical pleasures of the European birds. They have

no fear of man, not being aware of the destructive organs he possesses, or of the gastronomical delight afforded to him by the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea; consequently they omit all the arts for safety practised by our own little snipes.

Snipe shooting, to perfection, is to be had in Ireland; and, for the matter of that, snipe eating also—at least, before or since, never have I so fairly enjoyed a snipe as I was wont to do when in days lang syne I was quartered in Ould Ireland.

Those who question what I have asserted, as regards the remarks of Bourgainville, have only to visit the isles in question, there they may kill snipes as easily as quails in Asia Minor, and eat them also.

As with the woodcock, so with the snipe: these birds are to be found all over the world, alike for man's physical as for his gastronomical pleasure; and few birds are more delicate and delicious, if

cooked as I have suggested when dwelling on the gastronomical joys afforded by the woodcock.

They will be found surpassingly meritorious as a soothing *plat*, even to one whose digestion has suffered—from no fault of his own, of course ; but through the chance of ample means and a refined taste, which compels the possession of a first-rate artist.

Permit me to recommend a fat and aromatic little snipe, done to a turn, to be served hot and succulent, on a Dresden china dish, on the following occasions : When you return from the opera or play ; after a day's mental or literary toil ; when your precious wife is not in the best of humours, and you require internal solace. But I forget—it is good on all occasions.

To my sporting friends in particular, and to my readers at large—for, unquestionably, they deserve my gratitude—I would desire, but scarcely know

how, to give them the receipt of the *salmis des Bernardins*. It may be applied, recollect, to almost every species of game. These good fathers did not disdain any science conducive to their own, or to the pleasures of mankind in general. Moreover, in former days, as at present, though possibly in less number, the cloister produced men who were fully up to the art gastronomical, and were fully equal, in their own persons, to do justice to a *salmis* or any other appetisant dish set before them.

However, for your benefit, my sporting friends, I introduce a dainty dish fit to set before a king. I do not intend by the word "king" simply to imply the sovereign authority, or ruler of a nation, inasmuch as I cannot conceive such individuals as the King of Naples, King of Greece, Emperor of China, Sultan of Turkey, or the King of the Cannibal Islands, being equal to, or capable of appreciating, the gastronomical joys afforded by such a precious

decoction, when practised on the little bird called “snipe.” As for the physical joys it affords in the shooting, bah! Fancy such creatures, in leather gaiters, in so tempting a shooting-ground as an Irish bog! And as for shooting, what have they ever shot but their unfortunate subjects? By a king I infer simply a bold, noble-hearted, refined sportsman, or any other individual whose sensitiveness as regards his own gastronomical tastes is as delicate and true as are their hearts open and honest and generous towards their fellow-men. To them I say, or to their artists, of which they are worthy :

Take four snipes ; roast them, but not too much ; cut them up according to the rules of the art ; then separate the wings, the legs, the breasts, and the backs, and arrange them on a dish. On the dish on which you dissect them, and which ought to be of silver, crush the liver and the entrails of the birds, on which squeeze the juice of four lemons, and the rind, finely pounded, of one. On the members already prepared sprinkle a few pinches of salt and of allspice, two spoonfuls of excellent mustard, and half-a-glass of first-rate (mind, of first-rate, if to be found for love or money) sherry ; then place

the dish over a lamp of spirits of wine, and stir it well, so that the whole be impregnated with the seasoning, but let none unite. Take great care not to let it boil ; but when it approaches that degree of heat, sprinkle it with some fine olive oil ; diminish your heat, and continue to stir for several minutes. Then take off the dish, and serve it immediately, so that it may be eaten hot.

Recollect, when you meet with this dish, to use your fork ; as, in case you touch it with your fingers, you will devour them. Of course it is out of the question, under such circumstances, even to offer it to the Turkish ambassador—should he chance to dine with you.

All wild fowl roast well, as do snipes—that is, I ought rather to say, eat well if properly roasted—and should, generally speaking, be eaten, certainly as regards wild ducks, plainly roasted, with gravy sauce ; snipes as woodcocks, with a toast under them to receive the trail. These birds are also excellent in a *salmis* or a common hash.

If a cook is a cook, he can roast a wild fowl, be it

duck or widgeon, and serve it as it should be served—even to a gastronome. If a cook cannot cook a wild duck, he or she has appropriated a name to which they have no honest right; and the best receipt I can give you is, to get rid of them at once.

While speaking of sporting and professed cooks, I may name that a gentleman, who thoroughly enjoyed the former, and believed he possessed the latter, once brought home a wild duck and a dab chick or young moorhen among other game, and chancing to dine out, suggested to his wife that she should indulge in the gastronomic pleasures of the former. On his return, having warmed himself, as men do warm themselves cosily by the drawing-room fire, he thus addressed his beloved sposa:—

“Well, darling, how did you enjoy the duck?”

“Not at all, dear Goosy,” was the reply.

“Not enjoy it, pet? Why, it was the finest bird I ever shot.”

“May be : I could not eat it ; it was rank and fishy.”

Goosy—who was no goose—at once surmised the reason, and rushed to the larder, when, true enough, he found the chick had been cooked for the “duck!”

On naming the mistake to his “*professed*” cook, s he said—

“Really, sir, I thought the duck was a drake, and the chick the duck. You ordered the duck. I do not understand ducks in their wild state.”

The dab chick or moorhen had, by-the-bye, been stuffed with sage and onions. A little of the former would have done no harm to the cook.

## CHAPTER VII.

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### THE MACEDOINE OF GAME.

IN the macedoine of game I desire to include not only all birds which are denominated game by the law of the land, and by the English sportsman in particular—who, in fact, is the only real sportsman on earth, speaking of a class; though here and there a foreigner may be found, such as my esteemed friend Blazé, who would pass a very fair examination on the subject in general terms—but all birds which afford gastronomical pleasures in the eating thereof, as all birds which afford physical pleasures in the shooting thereof; although the destruction of many of them, as regards England,

can scarcely be termed actually a sportman's pleasure.

In this class, in order to complete the macedoine, may be named, the ortolan or bec-figue, the wheatear, the golden plover (an excellent bird), the thrush or grive, the blackbird, the lark, the sparrow, and last, though not the least, the robin red-breast; not forgetting Ruffs and Reeves, nightingales and bustards.

Previous, however, to a free and careful discussion of the gastronomical pleasures afforded by all these harmless and charming songsters, permit me to cull a few sentiments from one, in all respects, capable of illustrating the refined enjoyments arising from a sensitive appreciation of the good things, if not absolutely necessary, at least highly conducive to the enjoyments of an earthly existence. These sentiments are from a female pen; and let me ask you, brother sportsman, who is there—what

is there so conducive to life's enjoyments as woman? Returning from a fatiguing, yet joyous and successful day's sport, whether in the hunting field or the shooting grounds of Merrie England, to a home, however luxurious or however humble, what surpasses the pleasure of meeting in that home the woman you love, and who shares in your pleasures and details of sport, if so be she cannot practically join in them? It is, indeed, a pleasant rural picture, I have always thought—that of the “Sportsman's Return”—whether it be to the thatched cottage or the ancestral hall, when the woodlands are gilded with the many-coloured leaves of autumn time, and the fire shines bright on the hearth of an English homestead.

But I am wandering from thoughts gastronomic to thoughts rural; so let me quote the words of Lady Morgan, who says—“With less genius than went to the composition of this dinner”—

speaking of a dinner served by the celebrated Carême—"men have written epic poems. If crowns were distributed to cooks, as to actors, what wreaths would have fallen on his head!" &c.

This sentiment alone is sufficient to prove the necessity of my assertion in Chapter I.—that the sooner a college is founded for the education of cooks, the better; and no Reform Bill, whether emanating from the brain of Whig or Tory, Conservative or Radical, will be complete without the necessary outlay be provided for.

All the world knows, or fancy they know—the truth, however, will out some day—that stars and ribbons, pensions and baronetcies, secretaryships, aide-de-campships, consulships, and C.B.'s, have been awarded to men who have taught the world how to starve with patience and gallantry: and the public have unanimously applauded, save the few behind the scenes. What, in common reason, then,

should prevent the public applauding a government who gives far less, to teach people to secure life to others, and health and gastronomical pleasures untold to all?

Mr. Walker, author of "The Original"—a high authority on all matters gastronomical—goes much further when he says: "I cannot help thinking that, if Parliament were to grant me ten thousand a-year, in trust to entertain a series of worthy persons, it would promote trade and increase the revenue more than any hugger-mugger measure ever devised." Another celebrated author asserts that there are individuals to whom nature has denied a refinement of organs, or a continuity of attention, without which the most succulent dishes pass unobserved; and, again, that there are others who eat only to be filled.

I fully agree with the genius illustrated by the above sentiments, as do I with the high practical

sense of Mr. Walker. In the meantime, my experience tends more to the development of the pleasure secured to man by the physical joys of field-sport, concentrated, as it were, in the internal or gastronomical pleasures of eating the game, prepared by the hand of art, which alone can produce from it all those excellences, in a dead state, with which nature has awarded it in its live state.

What, may I ask, is more conducive to the health and vigour of man than high physical enjoyment in the open air, under the canopy of heaven? the mind at full work; yet, excited by mere pleasure, free from the anxiety of business—for the time, at all events, free from the cares of life; for it is to be hoped that neither the rejected lover, nor the debtor, nor the mental sufferer—whatever the cause—carries his sorrows with his double-barrelled gun into the turnip-fields. Even if he have care, it is lightened by the pleasures of the field; and he

returns home invigorated in mind and body to enjoy such peace as is allotted to man. Let not, then, his digestion and rest be destroyed by an indolent or ignorant individual called cook, but serve on his table the woodcock or partridge, which has fallen to his unerring aim, in such manner that he may sleep the sleep of the innocent, undisturbed by the nightmare or dreams of fat cooks and greasy stock-pots. And thus, with mental and physical powers revived and body in full vigour, he may rise on the morrow, like a giant refreshed, to go forth again over mountain and moor, through covert and stubble, in search of those physical and practical pleasures, in every sense of the word justly termed game.

Now let me return to the macedoine or list of songsters already enumerated. I will begin with the ortolan, a most precious morsel, gastrono-

mically speaking ; as regards sport, save the sport it affords on the table, I have nothing to say.

These little birds, I conceive, are generally netted or trapped ; in fact, a shot, even of the smallest, would be to them as a cannon-ball to a thirty-pound Norfolk turkey—a smasher. They are found in great numbers in the South of Europe, Italy, and the French Midi ; and doubtless the catching of them affords sport in more ways than one to the sporter—I can scarcely say sportsman—and brings with it a just reward. Gastronomically speaking, I have already said, and practical experience will verify the fact, the bird is a delicious morsel ; but in every sense of the word it must be delivered into the hands of an experienced artist.

It is called ortolan, or becafico, or becfigue. Some assert that the ortolan and becfigue are two different birds. I doubt it. And as in these days of steam and railways the world

travel more than they were wont, and consequently meet with delicacies which heretofore were beyond their reach or their purse. I would suggest to any of my readers who may chance to take the route from Paris to Marseilles never on any account, opportunity offering, to neglect breakfasting at the Railway Buffet, at Avignon. On all occasions the breakfast served there is admirable, and the gastronomical pleasures afforded in proportion. And nine times out of ten, in due season, you are served with a dish of ortolans, either roasted and enclosed in a vine leaf or *en salmi*; only be careful that, having once tasted, you do not linger too long over this gastronomical treat, or you may chance to be left behind.

Next in my list is the wheatear, a small and delicate bird. Sportsmen, physically speaking, of course never entertain it in the question of powder

and shot. Gastronomes think differently. However, a thorough sportsman chanced to sup with me in a Brighton lodging. I was desirous of giving him a light repast, to be succeeded by some full-flavoured tobacco, with my window open, looking on the bright blue sea by moonlight; and consequently provided a dish of wheatears hot, and some oysters, both being just in season.

What then? He seized the little birds by their hind legs, and having swallowed a dozen in as many mouthfuls (they are rather expensive) without uttering a word, at length exclaimed—

“Well, it is the first time, but I trust it may not be the last, that I have tasted a wheatear.”

“Say a dozen,” I replied.

“Be it so. My only regret is that the little wretches are not as big as partridges.

“Flavour? I should think they had a flavour!”

I may add, there are few places better than

Brighton for the gastronomical pleasures afforded by the wheatear.

The plover is another bird, of which there are many varieties ; all affording physical, as well as gastronomical, pleasures to the sportsman. I am not precisely aware that the species termed the “long-legged plover,” “long-shanks,” or “long-legs,” is often found in Great Britain ; but it is common in other countries. Its long, weak, and ill-proportioned legs are of a blood-red colour, and measure from the foot to the upper part of the thigh about eight inches ; moreover, it is of very little importance, as the “golden plover” is found both in Scotland, England, and Ireland, and is a pleasure gastronomical rarely met with.

I well recollect calling on an invalid friend during the shooting season.

“To-morrow,” said I, “I am off for the hills. What shall I send you?”

“A golden plover,” he replied; “in preference to any other bird I know.”

In a great measure I agree with him. Practically, there are so many birds affording high physical and gastronomical pleasures, that it would be difficult to come to any positive conclusion as to their individual merits.

The next bird with which I desire my readers to become acquainted, is the lark. The very name of the bird implies physical as well as gastronomical excellence.

Ask any youth claiming the honour of belonging to that distinguished corps, called “Young England”—ask him, I say, what a lark implies. The last reply he will give you is, “A bird, to be sure;” there are so very many larks pleasant to youth. Nevertheless, our larks which carol in the heavens when early spring-time refreshes the earth, finds its way into puddings about October, and is a rare

treat roasted when a frost sets in, affords no end of delight, physical, to youths in corduroy trousers and short jackets, and no end of pence to those who, having no better means of turning a sixpence into a shilling, expend the former in powder-and-shot, and receive the latter for their prowess from the poulterers for a dozen larks.

To a Frenchman, lark-shooting is sport in the highest sense of the word. Let a Frenchman have a day's lark-shooting, and he believes himself to be a thorough sportsman. It is an innocent belief; why deprive him of it? At all events, it puts me in mind of my friend Blazé again.

"In France," said he, "we shoot larks with a looking-glass: a very easy and a very pleasant pastime. In fact, it is like shooting larks sitting on the branch of a tree.

"I was one day," said he, "in a field, when I observed a shooter at some distance, who appeared

desirous of leaping a hedge. He held his right leg behind him, as if to take a jump, and then stopped.

“‘He’ll jump,’ said I.

“‘He won’t,’ said my companion. And his movements began again.

“‘The ditch must be very large,’ said I, ‘since he hesitates so long.’

“‘It is quite small,’ said my companion.

“‘It is deep then,’ I replied. ‘It is dry—it is full of water.’

“‘To be brief, when we approached we found the honest man shooting larks, while he turned the looking-glass, which was attached to his leg with a string. He never contemplated jumping a ditch, as there was none.’”

Larks, gastronomically speaking, are excellent when roasted; but they must not be over-roasted: very excellent *en salmi*, and by no means to be despised when embracing a beef steak either in a pudding or pie.

The sparrow follows (though few possibly allow it) close on the excellence of larks. Shooting them, save for practice, from a trap—no easy matter—to say the least of it, is mere boys' play. If you have a creeper, a Virginian creeper, over your out-houses, or barns, or stables, or thick ivy over a house or ruin, in which they are known to congregate, it is man's play, and a very pretty physical sporting amusement, to net them. There are flap nets made for this purpose; and with the aid of a lantern, to which they all fly when aroused, it is wonderful how many may be enclosed at one attempt.

Sparrow pudding — do not turn up your noses, gentlemen-sportsmen—is by no means a gastronomical pleasure to be thrown away when offered; and let me whisper in your ears polite, I know a cook—a real cook—none of your interlopers in the artistical profession—who would serve you a *salmi* of

sparrows, or sparrow patties, that not one gastronome out of ten would discover was not the success gastronomical to be attained, as many believe, by the flesh of an ortolan. The macedoine will be completed in my next chapter.

I may add, however, that sparrows are, in many respects, friends to mankind. Who has not looked from the dingy back window of his bed-room in a London lodging, in the foggy month of November, and had his heart cheered even by the chirping of a sparrow on his neighbour's chimney-pot? And what school-boy, home for the Christmas holidays, with sporting propensities swelling his youthful breast, who has not hid behind a wheel-barrow, or aught else, to fire off the horse pistol, he has saved up money during the half to possess himself of? Who has not disturbed, if not mutilated, some among a covey of sparrows enjoying themselves on a neighbouring manure-heap?

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### THE MACEDOINE OF GAME.

MY last chapter closed with the discussion of a sparrow pudding ; a very pleasant sport, believe me. My present introduces my readers to those strange little birds, called ruffs and reeves. Were I to enter into full details in reference to these winged contributors to man's pleasures gastronomical, I should have little space to discuss the merits of the remaining songsters, on whose assistance I must call to complete the macedoine.

Suffice that the male of this curious species is called "ruff," the female "reeve." They differ materially in their outward appearance, and also,

what is a very remarkable case as regards wild birds, it very rarely happens that two ruffs are alike in the colour of their plumage. They leave Great Britain in the winter, returning in the spring. Unfortunately, in reference to this species, there appears to be far more gentlemen than ladies; thus jealousy—that horrid enemy even to man’s peace—occurs among the male birds, and their combats to secure the favour of their lady-love (who becomes the prize of the victor) is described as being desperate, and of long continuance. Punishment, however, follows in due course, for it is at the period of such battles that they are caught in the greatest numbers in the nets of the fowlers, who watch for that opportunity. They are also at other times taken by clap or day nets, being drawn together by means of a stuffed reeve, or what is called a stale bird, which is placed in some suitable spot for the purpose.

The ruffs, I would be permitted to observe, is a high gastronomical treat, for the discovery of which we have to thank the worthy monks of Yorkshire in days lang syne. And, if all accounts be true, the succulent and agreeable food they offer to man even in the present is as much appreciated by him who wears lawn sleeves and receives five thousand per annum, as is it by him who receives fifty and wears serge. In fact, the ruff is highly esteemed as a most delicious dish ; and is sought after with great eagerness by those who live by the catching of them, in the fens, for the London markets. So we may reasonably conclude the sport must be one of no mean excitement, particularly if successful ; as I have been most credibly informed that two guineas a dozen is the average price for fattened ruffs ; and when fit for the table they are never sold under thirty shillings.

Be it understood, however, that much trouble

and expense is incurred ere they are in a fit state to prove their gastronomical virtues for man's benefit. Previous to being offered for sale they are put up to fatten for about a fortnight, and during that period fed with boiled wheatened bread and milk, mixed with hempseed, to which sugar is sometimes added. By this mode of treatment they become fat as an alderman, luscious as an oyster, and superior, in my opinion, to the woodcock, in the culinary preparation of which they most closely follow, and the bird then becomes truly a treat gastronomical—fully equal to the cost.

The lark, the ortolan, and the sparrow, all excellent in their several virtues, do not altogether equal in size a well-fed ruff, which has been known to weigh fully eight ounces, though the reeve seldom exceeds four. Two reeves, however, make one ruff, which is, to say the least of it, a consoling fact.

We come now to the blackbird and the thrush, those charming songsters in the gardens and woodlands of the United Kingdom. I own, for one, I have a great regard for them; I love their song, spite of my fruit, and, I must candidly confess, have an equal regard for them, gastronomically speaking, on my table.

As for the sporting pleasures they afford to an Englishman, of course they are *nil*. Such, however, is by no means the case as regards our Gallic neighbours, who, I verily believe—the majority, at least, who ever handle a gun—would be just as well pleased with a day after the blackbirds and thrushes, which I fancy they generally term *grives*, as would they to walk behind a pointer over a well-preserved shooting-ground. And throughout France they are served on the table as game roasted and *en salmi*, and in pies; and very good roasts and very good *salmis* are they.

Some assert, on what grounds I have yet to learn, that blackbirds are birds of passage; such, however, I fancy, is by no means the case. Nevertheless, they are birds of taste and judgment; and having enjoyed to the full cherries and currants in Old England, I have no doubt, such as can afford it, visit Burgundy and the South of France at the period the grapes are in their fullest ripeness. At all events there is not one man out of a hundred who is not their enemy in a vine country; and it is very just that they should pay the penalty of their numerous felonies by death.

A month's good feeding on grapes causes their flesh to be really delicious; and the shooting of them, having nothing better on hand in France, is a physical pleasure only one step inferior to that which they afford to man gastronomically.

From my very boyhood—alas! how many years ago!—I was always a keen sportsman; and I really

do believe, and no great difficulty either, that dead or alive I could discover the name and nature of a bird, even when roasted. It so happened that on one occasion I was travelling in the South of France with my father, when railways were not, and, after a long day's posting, we arrived tired and hungry at the hotel where we had decided on resting for the night.

"Go to bed at once, boys," said our amiable governor to myself and a younger brother; "and I will send you up some supper."

True enough we went to bed, and the "boys" were not sorry either; and true enough, up came the supper when we were half asleep. And among other good things, behold a dish of blackbirds and thrushes, roasted with bread-crumbs!

"What are these birds?" said my younger fratello.

"Du gibier, Monsieur," said the waiter.

“Gibier!” replied I: “look at their bills, Fred. Blackbirds and thrushes, as I live! but none the worse for that. I suppose they are game with these French fellows.”

Speaking of blackbirds—in the French language called “merles” — were you ever in Corsica, gentlemen-sportsmen? No? Well, then, I would courteously suggest your paying an early visit to that truly interesting and for the most part most beautiful island, were it only that you might enjoy to the full the gastronomical indulgences afforded by the eating of a blackbird-pie. I speak in perfect good faith, when I say the treat is worth a little trouble; and I speak still more earnestly, when I say that you may start from London on Thursday, and land at Ajaccio or Bastia, *viâ* Marseilles, on the Monday following.

Go in the shooting season. Provide yourself with double-barrel and rifle, plenty of good ammunition,

good cartridges, and a good deer-glass—in fact, all that is necessary for a sportsman ; for you will get little there of that nature. I should suggest Ajaccio as the best head-quarters. It is beautifully situated ; has a very fair hotel and a very agreeable little theatre, some interesting relics—first and foremost, the house in which Napoleon I. was born and lived ; and, above all, the island swarms with game, from blackbirds and thrushes to wild boars and deer. All sporting has been prohibited for three or four years past ; but I believe it is now open again. If not, an Englishman, being a sportsman and a gentleman, will always obtain permission. In winter, the climate is delightful. Bahia is almost equal to Ajaccio as a shooting quarter ; and, as well as physical pleasures, it is the place of places where blackbird-pies are made for Parisian consumption ; still, the gastronomical pleasure will be granted to you on the spot.

Of nightingales I have little to say either physically or gastronomically. I claim to be a Devonshire man; and general report declares that these charming songsters will none of us. But general report not seldom fibs; and I believe such is the fact as regards this assertion; for I fancy having heard their delicious notes more than once in the neighbourhood of a pleasant abiding-place called Chudleigh.

I certainly never took part in the shooting of nightingales; and I imagine even a Frenchman could not convert them either into game or *salmi*. Nevertheless, they unquestionably have been considered a gastronomical treat, even in the time of the Romans, who were not content with cold tongue and capon, but they must needs have a dish of five hundred nightingales' tongues.

Even the little robin-redbreast does not escape the talents of a professed artist, and, in proportion

to his size, offers gastronomical pleasures. In the category of sport, he certainly can claim no place, save that he sports with all mankind, inasmuch as he has made them believe that he is the most inoffensive, gentle little animal that ever picked up crumbs on a window-sill, or hopped upon a twig. Nevertheless, instead of being, as people generally suppose, the most amiable little bird, he is one of the most quarrelsome and pugnacious of winged animals ; and ornithologists agree in the fact of his loneliness being the natural result of his pugnacity. Nevertheless, the public generally, and many sportsmen in particular, would be horrified at the idea of eating a robin. Be it so.

I assert that he is a quarrelsome little vagabond, and ought to be eaten as well as other birds ; in fact, I have serious thoughts of enticing some dozen this winter, if it is a hard one, to my window ; and, having fattened them to repletion with bread-crumbs

steeped in Cognac, some fine morning I shall drop a net over their agreeable existence, and desire my cook to convert them into a *salmi*. In the meantime, let me assure you that their flesh is remarkable for a delicate and bitter flavour.

The talented author of "The Almanach des Gourmands" thus speaks of the rouge-gorge, or robin red-breast :—

"Il faut convenir que le rouge-gorge, qui tient un rang distingué dans la classe des bec-figues, est un roti très-succulent. Cet aimable oiseau se mange à la broche et en salmi."

Now, here the Almanach is wrong. The rouge-gorge, or robin red-breast, is not an amiable bird, but a little ruffian; for all that, he is no bad morsel.

All such birds, however, are infinitely better—in fact, are only thought of as a positive gastronomical pleasure to mankind in countries where fruit, and grapes in particular, are in abundance. Recollect,

my good friends, that the grapes of France make champagne, Burgundy, and Bordeaux, &c. ; recollect the flavours of these refreshing and aromatic beverages. Well, if the wine be the juice of the grape, you may imagine the interior of a little robin red-breast being well soaked with the same, and the consequent aroma with which its flesh is impregnated.

Though last, certainly not least, permit me to say a word touching the bustard. It is, in all and every acceptation of the words—sporting as gastronomical—a noble bird.

I perfectly recollect, when reading a very clever little work, entitled “The Art of Dining,” the author states that Mr. Fisher—who, by the bye, I understand, is also a fowler—being acknowledged as one of the best poulterers of London by a no less authority than that admirable judge of the art gastronomical, grandpapa Sefton to the present

Earl, once sent a bustard to Windsor, for which he received out of the civil list—a very civil list to him—seven and a-half guineas. All I can say is, I wish I had had the honour of Mr. Fisher's acquaintance during the late war with Russia. Indeed, I have no objection to pass a month or two this winter in Asia Minor, provided he pay me half the amount for each bird I deliver in Duke-street in a fit state to be carved by a royal knife and fork. Bustards abound in Asia Minor, and are found in considerable numbers in the Crimea. And I do not hesitate to say, that few birds afford more physical pleasures in the sporting thereof, or more gastronomical pleasures in the eating thereof.

There are two species of the bustard, the large and the small ; and, though by no means common, they are still to be found in the plains of Wiltshire, Dorset, and in some parts of Yorkshire. And I

have heard of the small bustard having been taken on Newmarket Heath, as is many a partridge. Be it as it may, large or small, they are both excellent eating, and, I should imagine, would well repay the trouble of domestication; indeed, if properly cultivated, might afford a far better repast than our domestic poultry, or even the turkey, for which we are indebted to distant countries.

Awaiting the trial, in these days of rapid communication, when quails and ortolans by thousands are brought from Alexandria, I see no reason that bustards should not be sent from Smyrna, the Dardanelles, and Asia Minor, with which places there is a constant steam communication.

The first on the list is the large bustard, a noble bird, deserving the attention of all sportsmen. In the steppes of Russia they abound; and during the coldest portion of the year they move southwards to the shores of the Dardanelles. Let Mr. Fisher

establish his agent at that point : I know a man big enough and strong enough for the place, if it is a well-paid one ; though Lord John Russell, in Mr. Punch's opinion, was not so for Prime Minister. In the meantime, most of the villagers in Turkey possess a gun of some sort—generally speaking, an old flint with an unusually long barrel. With these, when field work is impossible owing to frost and snow, a-sporting do they go.

During the past winter, one of unusual severity as regards the East, a friend of mine chanced to be on or about the spot where Xerxes paraded his army prior to crossing the bridge of boats to the European side, and where somewhat later in history the people of England bountifully supplied a set of half-savages, commonly called "Bashi-bozouks," with meat, drink, and baccy, till their condition was such that for want of something better to do, they nearly served their gallant officers

as I am about to tell you my friend served the bustards.

However, this spot, about two miles distant from the English Consul's house, is called in the year of our Lord 1858, as was it some centuries since, the Plain of Arisba; and then and there he met a sporting Turk—a Turkish sportsman would be quite another species of human nature—and, after a few courtesies on both sides, and exchanges of cigarettes, and "*Ish-malies*" and "*Kish-mages*" totally incomprehensible, he permitted an examination of his game-bag, in which was discovered a large bustard, two lesser ditto, one wild goose, three mallards, two sheldrakes, four widgeons, a couple of teal, two ditto of woodcocks, several plover, and a hare!

What say you to that, gentlemen-sportsmen who live at home at ease—what say you to that, with a flint-gun, long single barrel, no dogs, and bad

powder? What say you to that, Mr. Fisher, for the decoration of your shop at Christmas-time? One large bustard, seven-and-a-half guineas; two smaller ones (by far the best eating), say three-ten each; and the rest of the bag.

However, the sight of this abundance acted, as may be readily supposed, on my friend and a companion, precisely as a quarter-of-a-glass of first-rate ale would on a thirsty man when he got hold of the quart pot.

They determined to have a bag of their own; and, with this intent, having provided over-night a few cartridges made of No. 2 shot, set in tallow (a capital substitute when Eley's cannot be procured), they proceeded on the following morning to revisit the plain of Arisba.

The first day's result was three bustards, and several unfortunately wounded. They are hard to kill, recollect—their plumage being very thick.

However, they repeated their stalking expeditions—for stalking literally is it—for five successive days, killing eight birds during that period. What say you, Mr. Fisher, about fifty pounds' worth?

I may remark, in conclusion, that the number of bustards which visited the plains of Arisba during the winter past were unprecedented. Three or four flocks were counted at the same time, each containing sixty to a hundred, and even two hundred birds. And my friend writes to say that during the present winter he purposes adopting a mode of decoying them by means of stuffed birds, placed within shot of a covered pit, which practice he has heard meets with great success.

I would add, that the larger and smaller variety of bustard flock together.

Having shot them, and thus enjoyed the physical pleasure they afford to the sportsman, let us eat them: the smaller bird for choice. The larger may

be considered as a high-flavoured Norfolk turkey, weighing some thirty pounds; the latter, a nice hen bird—neither too large, which conveys coarseness, nor too small, which creates want of flavour and gastronomic aroma.

A bustard simply roasted—I speak, of course, in a civilized position, and not of the plains of Arisba—by an artist competent to the task, is as fine a morsel as a hungry biped need desire. Stuffed with chestnuts, truffles, and Oxford sausage-meat, it becomes a gastronomical treat which imagination can scarcely realize, but which practice most thoroughly approves. So stuffed, enclosed in a thick crust of well-made pastry, put into an oven and baked with care and discretion, it becomes food for which a gastronome may even pay seven pounds ten. For my part, the bare recollection overcomes me. So excuse me, friends all—sporting, professional, and civil—my dinner is announced: Boiled mutton and

turnips, a suet pudding, one glass, hot with—all ending in smoke.

The mutton discussed, permit me to suggest that no sportsman should allow a wood-pigeon to escape him.

I once shared in the eating of a wood-pigeon pie for supper, the excellence of which was such, that the dish only remained. No inconvenience followed, save a slight attack of night-mare, and pleasant dreams of my Henrietta, from whom for the time being I was separated.

The various birds I have named in the macedoine having all permitted themselves to be done to death by man, whether that man be a sportsman or a mere trapper of songsters for the benefit of his own pocket, and the gastronomical pleasures of the public, equally permit themselves to be roasted; and, if properly roasted, they are, one and all of them, most agreeable companions in the dining-room.

A *salmi* of larks, however, which have simmered during the morning in a bottle of Burgundy; a bustard as I have described, forced with Oxford sausages and truffles, and baked in a becoming garb of pastry; ruffs and reeves, served as are woodcocks; robin red-breasts, internally soaked with the juice of grapes, are gastronomical delicacies of unquestionable merit, possessing most appetisant virtues.

Blackbird pies and sparrow puddings, the birds resting with their plump little breasts on tender beefsteaks, the steaks having previously been immersed in golden sherry of ancient vintage and oily brilliancy, a few truffles well selected to breathe their aroma through the whole, are additional means for man's internal gratification.

Of nightingales' tongues I know nothing, save they charm in the vales of home, sweet home, in Midsummer time, and were by Roman authority pronounced pleasant to the palate of mankind, how-

ever the loss of them must have been unpleasant to their own.

In fact, if ornithology is a pleasant pursuit to men of such charming minds as had he of Selborne, equally pleasant must be the pursuit of all the gastronomical virtues possessed by the winged race to those whose mental energies are regulated by their interiors.

But first and foremost it would be as well ever to bear in mind that the manner in which birds are shot, picked up when shot, carried home, placed in the larder, the nature of the larder, are all matters generally lost sight of, nevertheless most material, indeed absolutely necessary, questions of importance to those who desire, having enjoyed the pleasures of physical sport, to secure it also in the perfection of gastronomy.

The term game-bag is simply used, or ought to be, as merely a term implying a certain quantity of

game, inasmuch as any real sportsman, desirous of granting to himself or offering to others the gastronomical pleasure attained or to be attained by his success in the field, would as soon think of putting a fresh-killed bird up the chimney as in his pocket or a game-bag, even one of those astonishing game-bags you see hanging on the back of a Frenchman, who follows a mongrel in the field, with his gun at present arms, as you pass through France in a railway train.

Half, or more than half, the game purchased in London, save by first-rate poulterers, who know better than to serve their customers with bad articles, is spoilt from want of care in packing (I allude to the flavour); or, being purchased from poachers, has been smothered, strangled, or netted. No bird can be good that has not bled; and were it possible that such should be the case, all game should be shot in the head, at all events; when

shot, the ruffled feathers should be carefully replaced, and the bird hung by the head, and thus carried to its place in the larder. If packed for travelling, the head should be covered with paper, and placed under the wing, and the moment it is taken from its confinement, hung up ; if possible, the birds should scarcely be allowed to touch one another. Two-thirds of the game in London is also spoiled by the cooking.

## CHAPTER IX.

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### THE GROUSE, BLACKCOCK, AND PTARMIGAN.

THESE birds may be fairly and unquestionably spoken of in the highest degree of praise, both as regards the great physical and agreeable gastronomical pleasures they afford to all the sporting world whom chance or means, or whatever the good fortune which enables them to have a pop at them, or to pop them down their throats.

The blackcock, as the grouse, may be justly denominated as inhabitants of that portion of her Majesty's dominions entitled "The Land of Cakes and Ale." The ale, however, has become heady; and the cakes are only attainable very far north.

In fact, Scottish hospitality—for which, in other days, read “cakes and ale,” not without reason—has become a myth.

There are, however, a sprinkling of grouse, as of blackcock, in the north of Old England; and occasionally I have seen the blackcock on the charming moors of Exmoor.

Russia and Siberia can also boast of grouse-shooting.

The ptarmigan is also found on the mountains of Scotland, as in Norway.

Volumes might be written, and have been written, on the subject of the physical pleasures afforded by these birds. I shall only serve up the tit-bits to my readers. To them I say—

“It’s up Glenharchan’s hills I gaed,  
And o’er the breast of Killiebraid;  
And many a weary cast I made,  
To cuttle the moorfowl’s tail.

“ If up a bonny blackcock should spring,  
To whistle him down with a slug in his wing,  
To strap him on to my Limzie string,  
Right seldom would I fail.”

Now in other days, as all the world sporting are well aware, a grouse-moor in the Highlands of Scotland was an autumnal pleasure-ground accessible only to the aristocracy of money, or, perchance, to be enjoyed by the friend of some Highland laird, who was welcomed, on his arrival from the Great Babylon, with a three or four-days-old *Times* in his pocket, by the whole clan, whoever they might have been, with a cordial hospitality and generous abundance which, unfortunately, by the advent of steam-power, remains only to memory dear.

There may be—perchance are—some few living sportsmen whose pleasant recollections of days lang syne would enable them to tell many a tale of the gastronomical treats, rude yet excellent as they

were, so liberally bestowed on him who was sufficiently lucky to possess a Highland friend who possessed a Highland moor and salmon-river—salmon, broiled, fresh from the laird's own stream; haunches from heather-fed, black-faced sheep; venison from the mountain-moor; marmalade and bannocks—in fact, no end of gastronomical pleasures—matutinally, just steadied by a small glass of whiskey, distilled possibly—who knows to the contrary?—on the laird's own domain.

Then shoulder guns, and away to those bright and health-inspiring moors which Scotland alone can produce in all their magnificent variety of beauty and splendour—

“ Those bonny brown moors,  
Shining and fresh with April showers;  
Where the wild birds sing  
The return of spring.  
And the gorse and the broom  
Shed the rich perfume  
Of their golden bloom—  
'Tis a joy to revisit the bonny brown moors.”

In fact, the 12th of August is now joyfully looked forward to by sportsmen, as is the 1st of September by all who can command the wherewith to pay for a grouse moor ; and Highland lairds have long since discovered that it is far more profitable to let their moors—over-abundant acres of heather land—to the moneyocracy of England, than to grant, as heretofore did they, physical and gastronomical pleasures to the strangers for nothing.

Grouse shooting, or rather the possession of what is termed a moor in Scotland, carries with it far more enjoyments than the mere sporting. I presume, of course, such a moor, and such accommodation, in the way of a house thereon, as permits the fortunate tenant, having a charming wife who enters into his sporting pleasures, to visit the Highlands also. The fresh breezes of a moorland ride on a bright August or September morning, in company with cheerful companions, is a phy-

sical pleasure only to be fairly estimated by those who have practically proved it. The free enjoyment, more or less rough, of an out-of-doors life ; the literal shaking off for a time the hateful dust of the world's fashionable doings—which means artificial and unnatural pursuits—from one's heart and thoughts ; the pure atmosphere of the heather-clad mountains ; the pleasant freshness of the meandering, sparkling trout-stream ; the clear and breezy mornings ; the glorious sunsets—in fact, the utter freedom and enjoyment of such contact with nature, practically and really, though be it only temporarily, is not only a pleasure unequalled to a sportsman which cannot be too highly appreciated, but the subject is far beyond the limit of these pages, though I may in great truth assert :

“ Dear Nature is the kindest mother still ;  
Though always changing, in her aspect mild :  
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,

Her never wean'd, though not her favoured child.  
Ah ! she is fairest in her features wild,  
Where nothing polished dares pollute her path ;  
To me, by day or night, she ever smiled—  
There, I have marked her when no other hath,  
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in  
truth."

Gastronomically speaking, the grouse is a most agreeable addition to the larder. There are few soups superior to grouse soup ; and in the Highlands, where birds are shot by hundreds, instead of by the brace, the attainment of this excellent forerunner to more substantial viands is not by any means difficult, provided always that you have a cook. If you desire, however, to eat it in perfection, I have only to suggest that your stock be made of grouse, with the simple addition of a blackcock or woodcock, and a small quantity of fillet of beef, the breast of the birds cut up in small pieces being added to the clear stock.

A grouse gives also an admirable flavour to gravy soup. And grouse patties, properly truffled, are trifles, although they by no means admit of being trifled with.

A roast grouse, young and well selected, whether hot or cold, is excellent. In the former case the bird must be served with bread sauce, as are partridges. A *salmi* of grouse is also a most pleasing gastronomical undertaking with a knife and fork.

A grouse pie! The very thought of it creates a gastronomical all-overishnish difficult to describe. As with the partridge, so with the grouse; the animal should be boned, and forced with a forcing made of the finest under-cut of a sirloin of beef (but undressed), truffles, one shalot, pork, thyme, and high seasoning. The most tender of beefsteaks ought to form the tapis on which the birds should lie snugly in the crust by which they are sur-

rounded ; that portion not filled by the birds being so by the force meat.

The blackcock is also an admirable bird when roasted ; and, moreover, boiled and smothered in onions. I have never had the pleasure of its gastronomical discussion when otherwise prepared by an artist ; I should imagine, however, that it would eat well in *salmi*. Broiled for breakfast it is certainly excellent ; and forced with a good force meat, as are pheasants forced, but made with beef marrow, truffles, and bread, instead of Oxford-sausage force meat. Thus prepared, it would be a most satisfactory improvement to the bird in its cold state. The season is advanced ; nevertheless it is my intention to try again the merits of the receipt given to me by a kind friend, and if successful, I shall give the benefit of practical experience more scientifically to the world at large.

One thing I can name with great confidence, as derived from internal experience, that both grouse and blackcocks of the year are better eating in November and December than are they in August and September.

I once visited a first-rate Highland shooting in the very heart of Glenlyon ; the snow lay thick on the ground, the mountain hares were as white as the snow, the blackcocks black as jet, and the grouse of the deepest madder. However, the severe weather had not been sufficiently long to cause them to lose the advantages of the autumn feed, and finer-flavoured hares, or more aromatic birds, never satisfied the palate of man. Indeed, I brought some birds south with me, and having submitted them to the refined tastes of those capable of forming a fair opinion, they were justly pronounced beyond praise.

Of the ptarmigan I have little to say. The

physical sport they afford is undoubtedly agreeable, and, moreover, by no means child's play. Gastronomically speaking, they have little merit, their flesh being dry, without much aroma. I prefer a woodpigeon.

## CHAPTER X.

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### RABBITS.

ERE we part, I have still a word for the million—a word which ought by no means to be lost: it refers to a little animal called “rabbit.” I have heard many persons say “rabbit it!”—and “rat it!”—and “drat it!” What “drat it” infers, even when uttered by angry and unpolite lips, I confess my ignorance. “Rat it” is another question. The rat is an obnoxious animal, and the very name conveys distaste. “Rabbit it,” however, is rather a pleasant sound; for, of all animals, legged or winged, save it be the ox, I know of none—no, not one—that conveys so pleasant a sound to the ears of a good

cook, or which, in all respects, confers such benefit to the stock-pot ; therefore, the gastronomical pleasures it confers on mankind are abundant and varied. As regards the physical pleasures, what say you to a good day's rabbit-shooting, friends all ?

The rabbit is described as a furry animal, that lives on plants and burrows in the ground. So far well. The description is brief and practical ; but scarcely physical or gastronomical, though furry.

However, let us proceed. Rabbits are divided into four kinds: "Warreners," "Parkers," "Hedgehogs," and "Sweethearts."

Burrowing under ground, it appears, is favourable to the growth of fur ; and the warrener, though a member of a subterraneous city, is more hardy than his kindred who roam at large. After him comes the parker, whose favourite haunt is a gentleman's park or pleasure-grounds, where he breeds in great numbers—even, at times, to drive the hares away.

The hedge-hog is a sort of vagabond rabbit, that travels, tinker-like, throughout the country, and would be better clad if he remained more at home. Sweethearts are what are termed "tame rabbits;" and, in this respect, unlike all their namesakes, afford no physical sport, and very inferior gastronomical sport. However, their fur is much used in hat-making, if their bodies be not equal to the fore-mentioned in stock-making.

Rabbit-shooting is a very pleasant pastime—and no easy matter either; and I would strongly suggest to all young hands when shooting to consider the foremost-half of the animal as a target, or it will be ill-shot, and most probably if any earth be near scramble into it.

I have said, gastronomically speaking, that no animal, in accordance to its size, contributes so largely to the pleasures of the table as a rabbit. Doubtless there are very many who will turn up

their noses, and say “Bah!” to this assertion. Patience, my good friends : hear what I have to say, and then, and not till then, decide the question. In the meantime, if you are the owner of a park or a rabbit-warren, and possess a fair quantity of parkers or warreners, or even hedgehogs, and chance also to have a fair sprinkling of poor relations, just bear this in mind—that many people like rabbit pie as well as yourself; moreover, that a dozen rabbits cost you very little, if you have a good heart and a generous disposition, as all Christian men should have—and you would be mightily offended if I told you you had not—you will be well repaid by the pleasure you will afford to him to whom you send them. Moreover, at the present exorbitant price of meat, you will save them that which is at times difficult to pay, a butcher’s bill. And, although Welsh rabbit is by no means a bad supper, a rabbit smothered in onions is a still better dinner.

*Bell*—who, of course, is read by every sportsman in the realm—speaks of rabbit-coursing. Doubtless it is a pleasant physical sport to the dogs, if not to the rabbits, and contributes to man's pleasures. Practically, I cannot speak as to its merits, the only rabbit-course I have ever attended having been that of a tender and very young mountain rabbit, which had fed on heather, at the second course; and it was pronounced by all present who ate thereof to be a most meritorious gastronomical treat.

Rabbit-shows have scarcely the right to a place here: the little wretches are tame, and oft-times fed to repletion. I can scarcely speak of them in the category of gastronomical pleasures—certainly not game pleasures. In fact, the very thought of a fat tame rabbit brings to mind an over-fed baby.

Speaking of tame rabbits, I once met with a most agreeable member of the medical profession, who

recounted some amusing anecdotes of his student-life. Among others, alluding to rabbits, he said :

“ Three or four of us, all wild as hawks, as boys of the medical genus are often wont to be, were in the habit of dining at a tavern in the City, during the period of our walking the hospitals. On one occasion the landlord informed us, with evident gusto, that some splendidly fat rabbits would be served at three P.M. on the following day. Of course, we attended in a body, with appetites like sharks. The covers were taken off. Behold, as he justly informed us, some remarkably fat rabbits, stewed in onions ! but, alas ! decorated when in the dish with ribbons, as are they, about Christmas-time, when of superior size, decorated in the market. The effect on me was instantaneous. The ribbons might have become the white-lace dress of mamma’s first-born : such gear has nothing, surely, to do with rabbits and onions.”

Ferreting rabbits is also an agreeable physical amusement, commenced by the ferret, and ended by the gun ; but, whatever may be the physical enjoyments this little animal affords to man, they are nothing in comparison to those which they grant gastronomically.

Rabbit-soup is, if concocted by an artist of repute, one of the best soups ever placed on a table.

A roast rabbit, stuffed with befitting stuffing—for that is a material point (moreover, I speak of wild rabbits in this category : either physically or gastronomically, I have nothing to do with sweet-hearts) — is a very succulent dish, and highly digested.

A rabbit-pie few would despise.

Stewed rabbit admits of considerable gastronomical gratification. Stewed in onions, or what is termed “ smothered in onions ; ” rabbit-patties and rabbit-resoles—in fact, a rabbit, alive or dead, is an

animal far more worthy of admiration than the world are inclined to accord it. And even the sweethearts, though denied the flavour and aroma of their wilder brethren, though not admitted into the game-bag, are most gratefully received into the stock-pot.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### FROGS.

START not, my dear readers of the gentler sex, of which I venture to hope for some thousands, do not excite yourselves or faint that I presume most strongly to recommend to your notice that amiable little animal called frog, croaker though he is. He dies patiently without a croak, that he may resign his hind-quarters to gastronomical refinement; for refined is the taste that can fully appreciate their merits, after having passed through the hands of an artist capable of producing all their excellencies.

I should be making game of you, my friends, did I attempt to assert that a frog numbered among the

animals called game, or came under the game-laws.

What then :

“A frog he would a-wooing go,

Whether his mother would let him or no ;”

which proves they are plucky and independent ; and doubtless the frog more immediately alluded to did go over to France, and subsequently became the founder of the frog family which henceforth contributed so largely to the gastronomical pleasures of Frenchmen in particular, and caused us in our ignorance of the good things of this life, jocularly to term our gallant allies, “Johnny Crapeau.” Though Crapeau is of the toad genus, all I know of the frog in its living state is that it is a small animal, with four feet, of the amphibious kind, which in the East croaks like a barrel-organ, and in France is said to sing like a bell: how a bell sings I leave you to define. In the land we live in it is considered a foul animal by delicate young ladies. With its dead state, however, I am better

acquainted, having taken within me some dozen of their plump little thighs, and I pronounce it a feast fit for Lucullus.

However, that my readers may the better be enabled to judge of the merits of an animal which rarely finds itself under sportive or gastronomical discussion, in all due courtesy to the talented author of the "*Almanachs des Gourmands*," published some half-century since, in the French capital, and read by the eager million, I will venture to translate his opinion of its gastronomical virtues.

"Frogs," he says, "are a most delicate meat, nevertheless not generally valued. Many persons, as regards their eating, much to their loss, consider it disgusting; they labour under a great error. A gourmand has no such false delicacy, his first duty being to taste all things previous to forming an aversion for any. I can therefore only pity those whose scruples cause them to deprive themselves of

the good things of this world. Such as have an aversion to frogs, generally speaking, have the same for oysters, cockles, and all small shell-fish. Alas ! how great is their gastronomical loss ! How much I deplore it !

“Frogs are a most agreeable, light, and healthy food, which, generally speaking, agrees with all constitutions ; but they must be eaten when in season, which is in the spring ; at least such is the opinion of Parisians, and then only are they admitted to Parisian tables.

“The hind legs or thighs are only eaten : these are served as fricassee of fowls, white, or fried in batter. They also make excellent soup, which is highly nutritious and invaluable to consumptive persons.

“Having said thus much, I was inclined to let my friends the frogs croak on in peace, when I chanced to receive from a lady, no less noted for

her amiability than her gastronomical taste, details, of which I dare not deprive my readers.

“There lived at Riom, in Auvergne,” said this charming gourmande, “an hotel-keeper named Simon, who had a peculiar talent for preserving and cooking frogs. Nevertheless, he made no mystery whatever of his art, and was always ready to practise his culinary genius in the presence of any one sufficiently curious to observe the process ; yet first-rate cooks by scores looked on without ever succeeding in that peculiar touch of art which enabled him to serve them rich and succulent, till the bones even became tender. Travellers from all parts of Europe turned fifty miles from their road to eat frogs, cooked by the illustrious Simon of Riom ; while to the inhabitants a frog dinner at Simon’s was a gastronomical pleasure, only equalled in the present day by a *sale à la Normandie* and a bottle of *cloche vogueaux* at Phillips’s, a whitebait

dinner at Greenwich, or—in a more humble way—a fish dinner at Symond's in Cheapside."

These facts are alone sufficient to prove the inestimable virtues contained in the hind legs of a frog. If more are required, let me add that Simon amassed a fortune of ten thousand pounds, though one franc only was charged for a dish of fricasseed hind-quarters from three dozen frogs.

Having once tasted them, great was the difficulty of knowing when to be satisfied ; and as it is almost impossible to get an indigestion by frog eating, the very wholesomeness of the food became a profit to the provider. Consequently he not only served them at his own hotel, but sent out dishes prepared by his own hand to all the principal houses, as to the restaurants in the town.

How great the misfortune, let me add, that railways were not during Simon's valuable life, or that fricasseed frogs could not have been exported as

truffled turkeys and Strasburgh pies! the dish would then have been fairly submitted to a jury formed of all the most celebrated gourmands and artists in Europe for analyzation. And at this hour, instead of having prejudiced persons and, pardon me, silly girls, who are not above red petticoats, crinolines, and outrageous absurdities called bonnets, term frogs nasty filthy creatures, our pleasant little home suppers of toasted cheese, or grilled blade-bones, or a dressed crab, would have been diversified by a dish of nutritious and delicate fricasseed frogs, possibly prepared by the delicate hands of her whose presence makes even toasted cheese a gastronomical repast.

However, still hoping these pleasant theories may become still pleasanter facts, let me continue to illustrate the mode and manner in which Simon obtained this remarkable gastronomical success.

Having killed the animal, and removed the only

eatable portion, the hind-quarters, he threw them into cold fresh water, where he allowed them to remain till the flesh became white and delicate. Each leg, being separated, is then dipped first into the white of eggs and then into flour, and subsequently fried with the greatest care and delicacy ; and while with one hand the frogs are placed hot on a hot dish, to be carried immediately to the anxious expectant of the precious morsel, the other, squeezing a lemon, lets fall a sprinkling on the tender thighs. This was Simon's *chef d'œuvre* ; his fricassees were equally meritorious.

As the receipt appears to come within the capacity of the humblest individual who is justified in calling himself or herself cook, it can only be supposed that the exquisite quality of Mr. Simon's frogs was caused by his manner of feeding them, far more than from his manner of cooking them. But herein was the mystery, which, alas ! it is be-





GRENOUILLES DE RIOM.

lieved, he never imparted to the world. All that was known is, that he had an immense cellar. In this cellar there was a quantity of vessels full of water, which in like manner were filled with thousands of frogs, the croaking concert of which formed a delightful music to all the neighbouring gourmands; but Mr. Simon alone had the benefit of close and practical contact with the musicians, inasmuch as, whenever he entered the cellar, he carefully closed the door after him.

I may also remark on the very important fact that, although at Paris frogs were only considered in season during Lent, those of Mr. Simon were delicious throughout the whole year, even in frosty weather — a period generally so prejudicial to aquatic animals, as regards their gastronomical virtues.

Whether this success was caused by his manner of nourishing them, or from any other particular

precautions, conjectures alone can be formed, as he kept the fact to himself.

One of the richest and most celebrated gastronomes of Auvergne offered Mr. Simon a considerable sum for his secret: nevertheless, he most positively denied having one, and assured his tempter that he might send his cook to see his mode of operation. The cook arrived, and, having strictly followed all the particulars he had observed, returned as wise as he came; so that the gastronome kept his money, and Monsieur Simon his receipt, which at length became so grave a subject to the people of Riom, that poor Simon was no longer termed "honest Monsieur Simon," but "Simon the Magician."

Wiser heads, however, were satisfied to eat the frogs as they found them, without fear of witchcraft; and from such he only obtained the nickname of "Simon the Frog." I fancy he consoled

himself for all such trifles by the yearly increase of his riches.

Nevertheless, whether he had a secret or had none, it was unquestionably his right to retain it; but the mere thought of its being lost to the world by his decease caused so much anxiety, that all the most distinguished gastronomes in Riom suggested that the mode and manner of preserving, feeding, and cooking frogs in accordance with the system he adopted should, if not previously made known to the public, form a codicil to his will, to be hereafter, at all events, the property of the State or his heirs, that the world at large might still continue to enjoy in after-ages the gastronomical pleasures he had granted to it.

Whether such codicil was or was not attached to the "Old Frog's" dying bequest, I am in ignorance. Frogs, however, I have eaten, and hope to eat again. Whether they were cooked according to

Simon's receipt or not, I will not presume to assert; but I recommend them to all my friends, male and female, as a gastronomical indulgence which adds solace to the heart, assists digestion, and increases rather than diminishes the appetite; for a dozen hind-quarters may be disposed of previous to the attacking of a haunch, however fat. In fact, a dish of frogs is a mere palatable plaything, to be discussed by ruby lips at a *petit souper*, or swallowed by a manly throat, while admiring the bright eyes of his *vis-à-vis*, at an equally *recherché* dinner-party.

"But," says a lady who has just done me the honour of a morning visit, "the frogs you speak of are French frogs: it would be quite another thing if they were English frogs. The French frogs are all of a bright green colour, and have voices like bells; and I have heard that the reason they are so numerous is that, when the hind-legs are taken off

for cooking, the frog being thrown into the water, they grow again."

"Now, my dear lady, in replying to you, I reply to the whole of your beloved sex ; you are quite as green as the French frogs. Green ones are there in Old England also ; but the light-brown are equally good. All you have to do is to avoid the old tough gentlemen, and procure your frogs from some brook, clear stream, or pond where watercresses thrive and rats are not ; then go to bed and dream of Simon of Riom. Having done so, rise the next morning, and follow strictly his receipt.

And now one word more ere we part. Serve this dish to your lover or your husband ; he is thine, as am I, for ever. And also recollect that a *vol au vent* of frogs is by no means inferior to a *vol au vent à la financière*.

## CHAPTER XII.

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### CONCLUSION.

THERE are very few estates where game is preserved, either in England or Highland shooting quarters, that do not possess rivers, lakes, or streams where salmon and trout abound ; and, are there very few shooters who are not fishers—and very few fishers who are not shooters ? From the time of our pleasant friend Izaak Walton down to the days we live in, men have, and ever will, cast the fly o'er rippling waters ; and boys have, and will, hook minnows and tittlebats, be it with a crooked pin. In fact,

“ When we please to walk abroad  
For our recreation,  
In the fields is our abode—  
Full of delectation.  
Where in a brook,  
With a hook,  
Or a lake,  
Fish we take ;  
There we sit  
For a bit,  
Till we fish entangle.”

J. CHALKHILL.

The physical pleasures of fishing, to those who love the gentle art, are, in truth, very little inferior to those of hunting and shooting. “ Very little inferior to hunting and shooting !” I hear some enthusiastic disciple of Walton exclaim ; “ not a jot inferior ! I look on the rise of a twelve-pound salmon, well hooked, and the subsequent sport to the death, by no means inferior to that of finding a fox in a gorse covert, terminating by a kill in the open.”

Be it so ; do not be angry. I find no fault with the opinions which come from the heart of a sportsman. I like the fox-killing best, I must admit ; but, in good faith, salmon fishing and salmon eating is a rare gastronomical pleasure—leave alone the cucumber. Aye, my good friends ! a delicious, crisp, cool, spring cucumber ; just kissed by the Lucca oil, which embalms its surface—just sneezing from the slight sprinkling of fine pepper, that covers its fresh and weeping aromatic surface.

Trout fishing—who says nay ! or ever will—is another glorious physical pastime requiring patience and art, mind and genius, with a practised eye and quick hand. How pleasant to roam along a sparkling trout-stream, whipping, as it were, the rushing waters ! Ever and anon, whiz ! out goes the line. Then follows the excitement, the physical talent, the landing net, the joy, the glitter-

ing fish on the bank, the weights, the basket. Such are the physical pleasures : then come those gastronomical—not to be passed over.

Watch the face of a first-rate cook as he handles a clean firm salmon or silver trout. The former to be boiled, lobster sauce and cucumber, as above. The trout not to be grilled like a red-herring, but coloured with the lightest brown surface, crisp, and hot.

In fact, deep sea-fishing, river-fishing, and lake-fishing, are all, in their way, replete with physical and mental delights, not only from the excitement caused by the absolute sport, but also the contact, under all circumstances, with the beauties of nature granted to man by God. Indeed, among all sports, fishing may be said to be the most innocent and health-creating amusement. Whether it be in the noble pursuit of a salmon in the Tay, trolling for a pike—the tyrant of rivers—or sitting,

like Job, in a punt fishing for roach from sunrise to sunset, as do some good people on the Thames on or about Richmond, it is of little importance to those who love the art; though, I confess, the latter is a sedentary sport the excitement of which is as yet not clearly defined to me.

But the pleasures—physical as gastronomical—of fish and fishing, are subjects of sufficient importance to form a charming volume of themselves, if well written; and, as for the eating, were I to commence with the splendid crimped salmon of the Severn and the fine turbot of Torbay, the lobsters and the shrimps, their necessary accompaniments, and go through the list of fish, ending with the whitebait—though least, unquestionably not last, in man's gastronomical estimation—why, I should be encroaching on this little book, merely intended to treat of game, and injure, if the one succeed, the

interests of the younger brother which may follow. I shall therefore conclude by remarking that the *salmi du Bernardin*, to which I have alluded more than once, was invented in a country which abounded with woodcocks, by the artist of a celebrated abbey of Bernardins, renowned for his excellent table. This artist was frequently directed to operate on this famous dish in the presence of numerous guests; but the copies which succeeded never equalled the original.

I am not aware as to whether the monastery alluded to is still in existence, of which the name itself implies gastronomy of the highest order. Suffice that it was, or is, situated on the banks of the Taurion, a small river celebrated for its trout, and which ought to be far better known. The monks, at the era to which I allude, were well aware of the treasures it contained, and well explored their inexhaustible trout mine. There, under

the easy government of a venerable Abbé, who ate vigorously by day and slept by night undisturbed by the night-mare, they led a quiet and luxurious life, forgetting the pleasures of the world without, but by no means those of the table within: and thus each week increased their *embonpoint*.

At last the venerable Abbé died, probably from over-eating, and his successor was appointed, who forthwith hastened to take up his abode at the monastery, of whose superior gastronomical joys he had already heard. On the first night of his arrival, a most *recherché* supper was prepared to do him all honour. Among other delicacies, a trout was served fresh that morning from the Taurion, and weighing twelve pounds. The newly-arrived Prelate attacked it with vigour, pronounced it super-excellent, and naturally congratulated himself on an appointment which offered

so many gastronomical joys, and hoped that such trout as that before him might daily appear on his table.

Alas! "man proposes, but God disposes." He had scarcely finished his third plateful, when suffocation commenced. Every remedy that art could invent was tried in vain: he died from repletion, with the tail of the trout sticking from his mouth.

Thus, on the same day, the Order were apprised of his appointment as of his death. A successor, doubtless, was soon named—good ecclesiastical preferment then, as now, are eagerly sought for — who, for all I know to the contrary, died likewise from repletion or indigestion, a death worthy of a Bernadin or a gourmand — two names in those days said to be synonymous.

May the public appetite find this little book as

much to their taste as did the poor Abbé the trout, without similar results, and, having read it, order a second dish, with a little more sauce *à la Bernardin*.







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